

# COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

SUMMER 1970

## THE COMING NEWSROOM REVOLUTION

Jean Schwoebel • Edwin Diamond

Did the 'Post' have to die? Robert Sherrod  
Max Frankel on 'scoopery' • John Lear on science writing  
TV news: how influential?  
The white captivity of black radio

... to assess the performance of journalism in all its forms, to call attention to its shortcomings and strengths, and to help define—or redefine—standards of honest, responsible service . . .  
... to help stimulate continuing improvement in the profession and to speak out for what is right, fair, and decent.

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Summer, 1970

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## Passing comment

### Dialogue in the newsroom

A 1968 journalists' strike against *Le Figaro*, publisher Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber told the Magazine Publishers Association last year, may have marked the "beginning of permanent problems in the journalistic profession, just as the Berkeley . . . riots of 1967 started world-wide student unrest." As in his bestseller *The American Challenge*, Servan-Schreiber perhaps oversimplified cause-effect. But there is no question that in journalism, as in higher education, deep tides of change are running and that the "reporter power" movement discussed in this issue is an important harbinger of that change.

Most American newspapers were founded by editors, not accountants or brokers or advertising salesmen. But with succeeding generations more and more publications have come to be controlled by noneditors. As publications and broadcast properties have grown in size, both the layers of authority and the distance between front office and beat reporter have multiplied—if indeed the owner is not an absentee. More and more, this administrative gap has been compounded by a generational one.

Meanwhile, populist trends of an earlier era have resurfaced in movements to humanize social institutions. The educational level of both our citizenry and journalistic trainees has risen. And the need for quantum leaps in journalism has become critical. What more logical development, then, than pressure by working journalists for serious dialogue with news media managers, culminating in sharing of prerogatives most directly affecting the journalists' ability to function?

Jean Schwoebel's comments in this issue describe one path this movement can take. The *Le*

*Monde* experience with shared management—told more fully in Schwoebel's book *Press, Power, and Money* (unfortunately, not yet translated and published in English)—is remarkable indeed. Under editorial staff control *Le Monde* has become efficient, prestigious, and exceedingly profitable, with a modern plant, steadily rising circulation, and a 1969 profit of \$3.5 million on \$20 million gross income. Millions of dollars' worth of advertising have been rejected to maintain two-thirds of its space as a "newshole."

As Schwoebel states, American journalism might not now be susceptible to the *Le Monde* approach. But as competition for exceptional talent intensifies, some variation of the *Le Monde* structure may become appealing to certain prestige publications. Employee "ownership" through trusts already has been instituted at such newspapers as the *Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel*, *Kansas City Star/Times*, and *Denver Post*. The next step—granting the editorial staff greater authority than now over what is, after all, an editorial enterprise—therefore would not seem too great.

In any event, purposeful dialogue between reporters and editors (and, much as they may resist, publishers) seems destined to increase. To the extent that the dialogue eschews rhetoric and rigidity and emphasizes reason and open-mindedness, the result can only be enhanced professionalism and more sophisticated, responsible journalism.

### Which way CATV?

For decades the concept of the "wired city" and "wired nation"—a cable network for videophone, facsimile transmission of mail and publications, computerized ordering and billing, voting and opinion polling—has been only a dream. With the arrival of cable TV, however, the foundations of the reality are being laid. As was true with railroads, electrical power, automobiles, industrialization, urbanization, and broadcasting, the consequences of early decisions about development will be permanent. On what basis are they being made?

Eleven years ago the Federal Communications Commission formally declined to assert jurisdiction over cable TV. After Congressional prodding



it reversed itself and began to move into the field. Thus far its activity has mainly encouraged "relay" systems that bring distant signals into small and medium-size towns, while tending to retard big-city development. But 12 million Americans—some 6 per cent of the citizenry—now are served by 2,300 CATV systems, and 2,000 more systems are under construction; annual revenues exceed \$300 million; and the number of subscribers increases by 25 per cent a year.

Moreover, as Ralph Lee Smith points out in a comprehensive report in the May 18 *Nation*, the conglomeratist tendencies which permeate print and broadcast media already have infiltrated CATV. Broadcasters own some 25 per cent of CATV systems (including large holdings by CBS and Time, Inc.), and phone companies own 30 per cent. "The autonomous, locally owned cable system," says Smith, "appears to be going the way of the buffalo."

Should equipment suppliers or multiple-media owners be allowed to own CATV systems? Should CATV compete with over-the-air broadcasting in producing programming? Should CATV accept advertising? Should importation of distant signals be permitted without royalty payments? Should some CATV channels be classified as common carriers, accessible to anyone seeking access? If so how many? How many channels should be reserved for educational and other "public" uses? How much should be charged for CATV franchises? How should customer rates be set? Should a percentage of CATV revenues be allocated as a "tax" to support public TV? What mix, if any, should there be between federal, state, and local regulation?

These are only a few of the complex questions involved. All presumably will be considered in a fifteen-month study by a Commission on Cable Television, established in June with a \$500,000 grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. All also must be discussed by the FCC, Congress, and state and local authorities who set policies for CATV operations. And all must receive thorough coverage. Considering the enormous stakes, and the demonstrated interest of publishers and broadcasters in CATV ownership, their willingness to provide such coverage will be a major test of the

seriousness with which they view their obligations under the First Amendment.

## Public TV's progress

Any public TV season that begat a *Sesame Street* would have to be recorded as historic, but 1969-70 was noteworthy for other reasons as well. Not the least were public TV's acquisition of CBS-TV's top programming executive, Michael Dann, and the recent amalgamation of NET and New York City's station WNDT. For the first time, U. S. noncommercial TV has a New York City flagship station and consolidated Manhattan production resources—long regarded by many as a key to improved national programming. And, as NET chairman Norman Cousins, who helped conceive the amalgamation, rightly points out, "Good programming is the key to obtaining financial support." For this reason, he says, "*Sesame Street* may be the most important single development in the history of noncommercial TV. It showed Congress and the public what noncommercial TV could do."

Given this demonstration, and the apparent end of the costly impasse between WNDT and NET over suzerainty in Manhattan, we now may hope that Congress at last can be persuaded to provide the funds necessary for development of public TV that can be called worthy of a great nation.

## "All the news"

There it was, among stories in the August 31, 1969, Cleveland *Plain Dealer* such as NAVY TOLD TO RELEASE PACIFIST, COMMON PLEAS FASTER IN RIOTS, and CELEBRATIONS BY VETS CLIMAXED BY PARADE. The headline, with a two-column photo, said: 17 CHEVROLET SALESMEN WIN TRIPS TO EUROPE. A story listed all seventeen, with dealership affiliations. In a city the size of Cleveland, in a large chain-owned (Newhouse) newspaper, what editorial criteria made this "news"? What, indeed, makes similar puffs "news" on real estate, business, sports, and feature pages? The answer is a few typewritten

lines—if they carry the right signatures, such as [below] those of (1) an advertising agency president, and (2) an executive editor:



August 25, 1969

Mr. Edward J. Connor  
General Advertising Manager  
The Cleveland Plain Dealer  
1801 Superior Ave.  
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Sir:

Here's the BIG NEWS STORY of the year for the CLEVELAND CHEVROLET DEALERS which we want you to cover with a photographer and a reporter without fail!

The 17-winners of the Chevy-Laddies salesman contest which ran to 3 months have been announced (winner's list attached) as the European group tour winners.

Saturday - August 30th - 3:30PM the Chevy-Laddies and their wives will meet at the Air Can's check-in counter at Cleveland Hopkins Airport to prepare for their 4:50PM flight departure ... starting a two week vacation trip to Scotland, England and Paris, France. (Trip itinerary also attached).

Once again may I stress the importance of your news coverage on this event at the request of all the Cleveland Chevrolet Dealers!

Thank you,

Leroy P. Lustig  
President

SVC: (2)

Memo

To: Ted Princietto

From: William Ware

Dear Ted:

This is a photo coverage that I fear we are obligated to handle. These are the winners of a contest conducted by the Chevrolet Dealers Association. The advertising which went along with the contest has been running in The Plain Dealer. I would think perhaps a photo and underlines would do the job with perhaps an agate listing of these 17 names. I would think the photo might be stashed away some place in either the Sunday or the holiday papers.

WMW/mjl  
Attn:

William M. Ware

## Enterprise in Alton

Last September 30 the Associated Press Managing Editors Association awarded a citation for exceptional Cooperation on Special Stories to the Alton, Ill., *Evening Telegraph* (circ. 38,102). The citation:

On June 11, 1969, the *Evening Telegraph* informed the Associated Press it would publish in its afternoon edition a story documenting that Justice Ray I. Klingbiel of the Illinois Supreme Court once received a gift of about \$2,000 in the stock of a Chicago bank. The AP moved a story quickly after the call. The exclusive copyrighted story launched an investigation of two Illinois Supreme Court justices who later resigned. The *Telegraph's* cooperation with the AP was outstanding in sharing this significant story with other Illinois AP members.

Last March, with announcement of the Sigma Delta Chi Award for Newspaper Public Service, the *Telegraph* was made abruptly aware of how much it had shared. The SDX Award went to the Chicago *Daily News*, for:

[demonstrating] in the Solfsburg/Klingbiel affair that journalistic enterprise of a high order can go hand in hand with a sense of civic responsibility of an even more commendable character.

The *Telegraph*, which had not submitted an entry, received no mention in the citation or in exhibits the *Daily News* provided for judging. Nor did the *Daily News* entry mention several other points. One was that a former *Daily News* investigative reporter, Donald Barlett, had unearthed part of the story concerning one judge in 1968 but that the paper—for what Barlett decided were questionable policy reasons—had spiked the story. (For this, among other concerns, he moved to the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, which later published his material.) Another point was that the *Telegraph*, about 9:30 a.m. on June 11, had told AP's St. Louis bureau the essentials of the story to be published that afternoon. The *Daily News*, whose exposés customarily run in all editions, published its first story in the second edition, which appears shortly before noon: an eleven-paragraph report far less comprehensive and conspicuously more vague than the *Telegraph's* direct, detailed forty-one paragraph story.

Once AP disseminated the *Telegraph* report,

other papers ferreted out important details, and the *Daily News* indisputably distinguished itself in the depth and continuity of stories and editorials. Under the circumstances, however, it seems inappropriate that the *Daily News* be recognized for "journalistic enterprise" while a principal catalytic agent in that enterprise is ignored. *Columbia Journalism Review*, therefore, awards a special double Laurel to reporters Ed Pound and Ande Yakstis of the *Alton Telegraph*—one for breaking an important exposé, and another for prodding a large metropolitan daily into the kind of action that large metropolitan dailies should take without having to be prodded.

## The review front

The existence of journalism reviews in Chicago, New York City, and Berkeley was noted in these columns in Spring. Now a monthly Denver journalism review has been planned for debut in August. (Subscriptions: \$5; address: Colorado Media Project, Box 18470, Denver 80218.)

The weekly newsletter *Straus Editor's Report*, published in Washington, increasingly also has shown attributes of a journalism review. One issue revealed \$5-a-day Navy cruises for media executives, and named these media as having been represented on 1969 junkets: *Atlanta Journal* and *Constitution*, CBS (three cruises), *Life*, *Miami Herald*, *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*, NBC, and *Reader's Digest* (three cruises). A more recent issue listed ten syndicated programs of ultraconservative commentary and the number of broadcast outlets for each, contrasted to four liberal commentaries given almost no exposure. Unfortunately, the newsletter's \$50 subscription price is prohibitive for most journalists.

Another development in media criticism came at the annual meeting of Columbia Journalism Alumni in May: they resolved to create state committees to review "journalistic performance of the area newspapers, newsletters, broadcast stations, and cable TV." Non-alumni participation will be solicited. Leonard Iaquina, Academy for Educational Development, 427 Madison Avenue, New York 10022, is coordinator.

## 'Crusader' internships

Far from the world's news capitals, from plush press-club bars, and from the camaraderie that metropolitan newsmen take for granted is a sector of journalism that is rarely publicized. It is the world of the small-town weekly newspaper. Most weeklies, like most dailies, are conventional, conforming, undistinguished, scarcely worthy of notice beyond their readership areas. But a minority—some of which we have had occasion to call attention to—are noteworthy for their quality, courage, and crusading zeal.

The *Mountain Eagle* ("It Screams") of Whitesburg, Ky., is one of those papers. Its editor, Tom Gish, now forty-three, was born and grew up not far from the newspaper office in Eastern Appalachia's Letcher County. He worked ten years for UPI in Kentucky, and his wife Pat reported for the *Lexington Leader*. In January, 1957, having learned the *Mountain Eagle* was for sale and deciding that "we wanted the leisurely life of country editors," the Gishes moved to Whitesburg. Their lives seldom have been tranquil since.

A flood in 1957 severely crippled the county's economy. Succeeding waves of layoffs in mining wiped out half of the area's jobs. Meanwhile, Gish, believing that a newspaper best serves its readers by reporting and commenting on actions vital to their interests, began doing just that. He started by attending meetings of the school board and other public bodies. But, he says, "public agencies here showed no understanding of the fact that reporters had a right to attend." One board passed a resolution (successfully contested) barring him from meetings, and a county official threatened Gish with death if the paper published an audit of his accounts. Gish published the audit and heard no more from the official. But county legal advertising—an important source of income—soon was withdrawn from the paper.

Stories and pictures on the ravages of strip-mining cost him more advertising. But in the long run, one of the most costly crusades was a lengthy effort to gain support for a TVA-type development program for Appalachia. "Some top officials of the Kentucky Power Company, which had been running weekly ads, asked me how much money

it would take to shut me up," says Gish. "I told them in substance they didn't have that much money." Whereupon the company stopped advertising (costing Gish \$1,800 in annual revenue) until last year, when it began a \$33-a-month schedule—which, says Gish, "means I can't charge that they're boycotting me."

The paper's trading area has lost population, an ultra-conservative weekly has been launched as competition, *Mountain Eagle* circulation has fallen to 3,700, threatening phone calls are commonplace, and the Gishes—parents of five children ages five to seventeen—are living on Pat's salary as an Office of Economic Opportunity program director, while the once-profitable paper barely breaks even. But Gish refuses to leave. "Maybe it's stubbornness and a little bit of stupidity," he says. "But I have immensely enjoyed the freedom here, and the paper has good basic support among the mountain people."

Who will help Tom Gish, or Wisconsin weekly publisher William Schanen—whose struggle against a Right-wing boycott was described in these pages last Fall—or other crusading editors being ground down by the petty tyranny that can be synonymous with small towns? Only extra advertising or job-printing orders can appreciably increase their revenue, and these customarily are in short supply at most weeklies. (An influx of out-of-state job printing business has, however, enabled Schanen to save one of his three weeklies.)

We wonder about another possibility. That is for one or more foundations to contribute to reporter "internships" at crusading small-town papers. A young reporter, perhaps newly graduated, could benefit enormously from experience under a Tom Gish. And an editor-publisher-reporter-accountant-printer like Gish could only be helped by an extra hand not chargeable to payroll. Fellowships could be awarded to a designated number of applicants, who would select their "internship" paper, with the editor's approval. If a nation succeeds or fails at the grassroots (which in the end it does), and if small-town life and small-town journalism have something special to teach (which they do), then it would seem that a program of "crusading-newspaper internships" could be of unique value.

## One-man 'events'

In a *CJR* article last Winter ["Must the Media Be Used?"], James McCartney bemoaned the ease with which obsolescent definitions of "news" lead to overemphasis of "media events." How easy is it to get a headline? Consider these examples [*Washington Post*, October 18, 1969, and *New York Times*, January 26, 1970], and ponder the hope for improved press credibility under news judgments such as these:

### Svetlana Attends Services Here, Is Heckled Afterward

The archbishop had invited her to stay for a reception that had been arranged in his honor, and she accepted.

While she was eating, an unidentified person came up to her table and asked her in Russian what she, the daughter of Stalin, was doing in a Christian church and why she had changed her name from Stalin to Aliluyeva, the maiden name of her deceased mother.

At this point, an assistant priest intervened and ordered the man to leave the church immediately. The man "red head" at the door.

### Student Interrupts Hunter Graduation, First Under Ex-Nun

14, 1870.

About 2,100 spectators were in the assembly hall at the college, 1495 Park Avenue. As they sat listening to Mrs. Wexler's three-minute speech congratulating the graduates, a graduate, Leo E. Lillard, walked silently down the aisle with his fists raised in the air. When the recipients stand in line, his name was called.

## Inner-city breakthrough

Most commission reports are the essence of ephemera, quickly consigned to archival oblivion. For the most part the Kerner Commission report has been no exception. As noted in *PASSING COMMENT* last Fall, however, the Ford Foundation has provided funds for a New York City experiment in implementing one proposal: an urban news service to help improve inner-city coverage. Known as Community News Service, the project is administered by the Center for New York City Affairs of the New School for Social Research.

With a staff of some twenty reporters and city-room supervisors, CNS since April has been providing two copy deliveries daily: a "Community Calendar" (in early afternoon) to help news media plan assignments, and a news file averaging six stories (about 6:30 p.m.). More than a dozen media outlets are CNS subscribers, including the New



York Times (two subscriptions), New York Daily News, WCBS-TV, WNBC-TV, WOR, and WINS. Corporate PR offices, government agencies, and poverty and neighborhood organizations also subscribe. Rates range from \$200 a week for large media, which get deliveries by motorcycle, to \$10 for small agencies. General director is Philip Horton, former executive editor of *Reporter*; editor is George Barner, former reporter for the *Amsterdam News*.

Newspapers generally use CNS as a tip sheet for follow-up, but the Sunday News in particular has adapted feature stories for neighborhood sections. Smaller newspapers carry CNS copy intact with a CNS dateline. Within two years Horton hopes CNS will be self-supporting. Then, building on New York's experience, similar services might be started in Chicago and Los Angeles—if funding can be arranged.

## Darts and laurels

**Dart:** To WETA-TV, Washington, D. C., for firing William Woestendiek from editorship of its *Newsroom* show [see NOTES ON THE ART] because of possible "conflict of interest" when his wife became press adviser to the Attorney General's wife. As Washington newsman Peter Lisagor pointed out, "A one-month-old program trying to get off the ground has to be above all controversy and suspicion," but summary dismissal of Woestendiek scarcely contributed to that goal—especially since Max Kampelman, a close associate of Hubert Humphrey, was serving as station board chairman and moderator of a WETA public affairs show with no questioning of his "objectivity."

**Laurel:** To FCC Commissioner Kenneth Cox, for demonstrating in his seven-year term just ended how knowledge, energy, courage, and tact can be combined in distinguished service on public regulatory bodies.

**Dart:** To the President, for not reappointing Mr. Cox to the FCC.

**Laurel:** To Walter Cronkite's *CBS Evening News* staff for exposing an Administration campaign to discredit its Vietnam war coverage—by devoting part of the May 21 newscast to a point-by-point dissection of false charges about an atrocity report telecast last November.

**Dart:** To Senator Clifford Hansen of Wyoming for a June 2 speech excerpted below:

UPI-152  
(OIL & GAS)  
WASHINGTON--SEN. CLIFFORD P. HANSEN, R-WYO., SUGGESTED TODAY THAT OIL AND GAS COMPANIES USE THEIR ADVERTISING EXPENDITURES TO INFLUENCE NEWSPAPERS IN THEIR HANDLING OF NEWS ABOUT THE INDUSTRY.  
COMPLAINING THAT "OIL IS A DIRTY WORD" IN "MOST OF THE EASTERN PRESS," HANSEN SAID OILMEN SHOULD TRY TO CONVINCE PUBLISHERS TO PUBLISH NEWS ABOUT "THE REAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE INDUSTRY" INSTEAD OF ONLY NEWS ABOUT OIL SPILLS, OIL POLLUTION AND THE OIL DEPLETION ALLOWANCE.  
"I WOULD THINK THAT THE SIZEABLE EXPENDITURES MOST OIL AND GAS COMPANIES MAKE IN ADVERTISING WOULD ENTITLE YOU AT LEAST TO BE HEARD," HANSEN SAID.  
IF PUBLISHERS CANNOT BE PERSUADED TO PRESENT THE INDUSTRY'S STORY, HE SAID, "THEN YOUR ADVERTISING AGENCY MIGHT GET THE MESSAGE THROUGH MORE EFFECTIVELY."  
THE SENATOR, A VIGOROUS DEFENDER OF THE INDUSTRY, MADE HIS PROPOSAL AT A LUNCHEON OF THE GAS MEN'S SOCIETY, AN ORGANIZATION OF 300 PEOPLE IN INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT WITH SOME INTEREST IN THE NATURAL GAS INDUSTRY.  
"SPAN" "LEVI" OR DAN" STAT" 'S PA' OF "BUSI" 'S

**Laurel:** To the Long Beach *Press-Telegram*, for a post-Cambodian special section prepared by student journalists at the local California State College branch. In a page 1 editorial, the paper explained: "The section . . . is an attempt to provide a peaceful forum whereby the students can present their opinions and the public has a chance to listen."

**Dart:** To Newhouse News Service, for spreading an unfounded rumor that the RAND Corporation had been asked by the White House to study what would happen if the Presidential election of 1972 were called off. The "scare" rumor, which a Newhouse reporter says was "picked up in New York," was further disseminated by the *Village Voice*, the *Nation*, a Chicago *Sun-Times* columnist, and several underground newspapers, all of which employed the "authority" of the Newhouse chain to give credence to the rumor.

**Laurel:** To the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, for a thoughtful, well researched series on Alaskan development and conservation problems, based on extensive travel and interviewing.



## The coming newsroom revolution: 1

JEAN SCHWOEBEL

### The miracle "Le Monde" wrought

For most of a century, technology has been changing the physical profile of journalism. Now, almost unnoticed, a companion revolution has begun. Still embryonic but clearly irreversible, it has to do with who within a journalistic institution can raise basic questions about it and receive meaningful answers; the extent to which journalists shall be free to exercise professional skills within corporate structures they do not own; and ultimately, the question of whether distinguished, sophisticated journalism can thrive in an organization in which fundamental editorial arrangements are determined by fiat.

In the interview below, Jean Schwoebel, urbane, thoughtful diplomatic editor of *Le Monde* and architect of its pioneering staff-controlled management structure, describes his historic experience in Europe. The report following it discusses the increasingly significant "reporter power" movement in the U.S.

**The Society of Journalists is the vehicle through which staff control of *Le Monde* is exercised. How did it begin, and why?**

Two factors produced the Society of Journalists. We had the historic Revolution in France; we have this tradition. Then there was the liberation of France in World War II. The Occupation was very hard. Many papers had accepted the law imposed by Occupation forces. So at the end of the war there was a general idea that the press was not valuable because it had collaborated with the Germans. So there was a law after the Liberation to expropriate—confiscate—properties of editors

of the old press, and their estates were put in charge of national societies. The idea was that we were to create a new press.

At the end of the war we had big illusions and big hopes, and we thought we could keep the press free of economic control. We could see that freedom of the press must not only be freedom from oppression by the State; the State in a way is an expression of the democratic majority. To a certain degree the press was in control of political parties, with a degree of protection against central power. But we also could see that economic progress depends more and more on very large investments, and freedom of expression is given

only to people who can assemble formidable capital. So in a modern society freedom of the press is not only a question of structures which give freedom to journalists in relation to political powers, but also to economic powers. In the Resistance that idea was commonly accepted. That was a very revolutionary period.

Of course, we live in a capitalist country, so these ideas were progressively abandoned. More and more the "new" owners have changed their minds, and they are exactly like their predecessors. Except for one—*Le Monde*.

*Le Monde* was directed by Hubert Beuve-Méry who had been asked to found a newspaper with the property of the old *Le Temps*. He had a very high conception of the press. When he was obliged for many reasons to submit his resignation in 1951 there was a rebellion on the editorial board. The editorial staff was a very strong force because *Le Monde* practiced a very high level of journalism, and its quality depended very much on us. Influential elements in France—the universities and the élite—were waiting for a declaration from us. The thought that *Le Monde* would have any other direction was a kind of scandal. So we were in a good position with the owners, and in 1951 we obtained the first agreement—it was not the last—entering into ownership.

#### Why did the editorial staff insist on sharing ownership?

If you want to exert influence in a capitalist country there is only one way, and that is to have part of the ownership; the rest is without value. It was a good time to ask for part of the ownership. The capital of the country was very low. The Liberation could take over such estates. It was something of a special situation.

In Europe the status of journalists is very low because we work in a commercial framework. And what is the law of commerce? It is to make maximum profit. And what is the way to maximum profit? It is to have a maximum of receipts and a minimum of expenses. If there is any reduction it is in expenses. So in general the papers of France have very low-paid journalists. Because they don't pay them, of course, the journalists are not of the

quality required in view of their profession. We say that is a stupidity and a danger to the future.

We have the conviction that in modern societies progress depends on the high quality of citizens. To have a high quality of citizens you must have a high quality of education. It is a very common thing now to learn to read. Every country knows we must free the people of illiteracy. We must move to a higher level now. We must have citizens able to choose representative people in any field of activity. And they can do so only if the citizens know the real facts—the factors of every situation. If you don't have that it is a caricature of democracy. That is why we say that only a society which has highly qualified journalists can progress.

We contend that present structures do not offer to citizens the guarantee of a high quality of journalism. And so this is an idea which is more and more being adopted by journalists in France.

#### What are the prospects for shared management on other French newspapers?

Thirty-two societies have been created, within all the big papers of France. They have been created in the hope of having the same arrangement we have at *Le Monde*. They have been opposed systematically by the managers. So they have federated, and I am president of this federation, to try to act in the political field, to act on the Deputies, the Senators, the Government. We were on the point last year of winning the battle to pass a law. We had many friends. DeGaulle was playing his cards politically. As with Algeria he tried to make compromises. He was not prepared to go as far as we were.

#### Was a bill introduced?

One of the main reasons why deGaulle fell was this question. All the conservatives were fanatically opposed to any kind of participation, because in France there is a very old tradition of management authority. In a way I think the United States is much more advanced on the question of cooperation and work in teams. That tradition does not exist in France, and that in my view is a paramount question. If we don't change on the ques-

tion of the authority of middle age, we cannot change much else. We have a very strong concentration of that kind.

So a commission was created by the Government to study our ideas, but with the departure of deGaulle and the reaction of the managers and owners the issue has been tabled.

**If deGaulle had not fallen would you have had a realistic chance?**

It would have been difficult, but we were on our way. But we will have our day. Already there is a tendency to come back to our conception because it is necessary for the future, and because it has had an impact on countries around us. I have

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*"A scandal that economic processes control the press..."*

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been to Germany, to Italy, to England, to Belgium, and to Spain, and I see everywhere the same state of humiliation, of dissatisfaction among journalists over feudalistic power.

In fact, at *Le Monde* we have succeeded not only in quality of information but in quality of administration. And that is very important. We did not surprise the industry on the first point, but on the second. We have a profitable enterprise, and the discipline is exceptional because we are conscious of the important questions of what is best for the structure, for the organization, for its ethics. But the daily administration we do not determine at all.

**How successful is "Le Monde" as a business?**

*Le Monde* has high profits. It has a modern mechanical plant. Its circulation is high. These are the reasons why our example has been followed in Germany. We were able to give them all the mate-

rials and concepts. We already had twenty years of experience—and not abstract experience. It was experience in the responsibilities of a major enterprise. We know the realities of an enterprise. That gives us real force. That is why in Italy last year I was invited to speak to Catholic journalists, and two months later, to all the journalists of Italy.

**You have named newspapers and a magazine. Could this apply to television also?**

Television is another problem. The Society of Journalists was contacted two years ago about TV, but the Department of Television has been in chaos. So there is no more a Society of Television. The TV situation is very difficult, because it is in a sense directed by the State.

**How does the Society of Journalists function?**

We are not like the American Newspaper Guild. We decided first to be a "commercial" society. Now we are a civil society. We do not want to operate like capitalists. We do not want part of the profits. We want part of the ownership not for the profits—that is for the investors—but only for the juridical rights the property gives. As soon as we leave the paper we have no more rights.

The Society of Journalists has an assembly and a council of administration. We try to unite the journalists in a common conception. To unite journalists is very difficult. You succeed only if you pick very solid, very reasonable arguments. And in my view we have united on very sensible, responsible problems.

**There has been an epidemic of criticism of the news media in the U. S. If your success were duplicated there, might there be fewer such criticisms?**

We have had no relations with American journalists on this question. But in my view we are all, of whatever country, journalists, with common responsibilities. I think that in the future the journalism profession will be most important. It is not a question of nationalism—of nations. We

must have a solidarity among journalists to improve their status.

Political men may be very authentic men, but they are dependent in large degree on the man who elects them, and it is on journalists' courage and quality that we depend to raise the quality of citizens. Our profession must push the legislative man to courage, because he is so dependent. So in a way we have to sustain him.

**Since "Le Monde" is an élite newspaper, should we assume by analogy that the most likely place for your idea to take root in the U. S. would be on an élite or quality newspaper?**

Very possibly it could happen someday at the *New York Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and maybe the *Washington Post*. But I know perfectly well that conditions are different in America. You in the States are advanced in something which is necessary—efficiency, energy, and so on. But maybe you are slow to realize that the real cause of chaos in the future involves a dimension beyond efficiency.

Your journalists are much dependent on a society which still believes much in profitability—which is necessary. I think the view of profits, of commerce, in American society in a certain measure represents progress; in another way, not. I believe sincerely that it is much more difficult for American journalists than for us because in such a society as yours it is not regarded as a scandal that economic processes control the press. In European societies it is looked on as a scandal that economic processes control the press. In my view, control of the press by economic processes is completely anti-American.

In ten years I am sure this philosophy will have taken root in America. I say that not only journalists have a right, but clerks or workers have a right to press for their rights. But journalists are different. We are the defenders of truth. Now progress is a question of dialogue. We are at the end of a certain kind of journalism—of magisterial journalism—and of a certain kind of journalist: the magisterial journalist. And we must accept the dialogue.

## Europe's shared management plans



□ *Le Monde*, first publication to institute a shared management plan with editorial employees, was established in 1944 by nine "Associates," including founding editor Hubert Beuve-Méry. Associates were entitled to no dividends, only 6 per cent interest on aggregate holdings of 200 "lots." In 1951, when Beuve-Méry resigned over a policy disagreement with two Associates, the editorial staff—acting through the newly created Society of Journalists—refused to work without him. Through negotiations the Society obtained 28 per cent of the Associates' lots and effective veto power over substantive decisions (which required three-fourths majority approval). Beuve-Méry withdrew his resignation and helped formulate a revised distribution of lots, approved in 1968. Under it the Society has 40 per cent control, associated founder-members have 40 per cent, and managers of the paper, noneditorial supervisory personnel, and clerks share the rest.

Major decisions such as nomination of a new "managing director" (who must be a journalist), raising of capital, or changes in the company's structure require 75 per cent majority approval by Society members. The managing director has full operating authority to hire, fire, determine salaries, and set editorial policy, but can be dismissed on demand of the Society. An advisory board of representatives of employee groups periodically reviews the paper's finances.

Journalists at the West German picture magazine *Der Stern* have held similar but less comprehensive rights since last year, when a principal owner was blocked from selling his interest to a mass-magazine chain. Affirming the statement of a sub-editor that "we do not intend to be sold like cows," the staff threatened to resign; the owner sold his shares to his partners; and a journalists committee was granted significant prerogatives. A two-thirds majority must approve hiring or firing a chief editor or dismissal of editorial employees; changes among deputy editors, heads of departments, or the political staff may be vetoed by a two-thirds vote; and "no staff writer or contributor may be required to act or write against his own convictions." *Der Spiegel* and *L'Express*, among others have similar plans.

Journalists at *Le Figaro*, one of France's oldest newspapers, last year engaged in a two-week strike to gain comparable concessions. Their case since then has been taken to court.

In Rome, Italian journalists have established a "Movement of Democratic Journalists for Freedom of the Press" to protect newsmen's independence by collective bargaining; and in Britain, a "Free Communications Group" is campaigning to bring print and broadcast media "under the control" of journalists.



## The coming newsroom revolution: 2

EDWIN DIAMOND

### 'Reporter power' takes root

Women, blacks, newsmen opposing subpoenas, organizers of local press reviews — all are part of a movement determined to change American journalism.

■ One of the most significant and underreported social experiments of 1969 took place in the small northern California community of Willets. There, forty-three-year-old George Davis, a football coach who describes himself as "a small man with nothing to lose," fielded a football team each Saturday using the principle of participatory democracy; the players themselves voted on who should be in the starting lineup. The team lost its first four games of the season but rallied and ended in a tie for the league championship. This record, of course, might have been as much due to talent as to democracy. Still, the implications of the Davis experiment are clear: in an era marked by the pervasive and passionate questioning of all authority, even the football coach—that traditionally rigid hierarchical figure—is trying to bend with the times.

In American news media most communications caliphates are more like Vince Lombardi than George Davis—they are big men with a lot to lose, so to speak—and so the principle of electing editors or announcers has not yet been established. But a sampling of attitudes in a number of city-

rooms, magazine offices, and broadcast studios indicates that day may not be far off. In various cities journalists have banded together to impress their professional beliefs and occupational misgivings upon management.

At the Gannett papers in Rochester, N. Y., editorial staff members have begun sitting in with the papers' editorial board on a rotating basis. In Denver, a new Newspaper Guild contract signed in mid-March establishes an ethics committee and a human rights committee that will meet regularly with management. The human rights committee plans to take up the question of minority employment (women as well as blacks) at the *Post*; the three-member ethics committee, which will meet with three representatives of management, wants to discuss such hoary *Post* practices as trade-outs—editorial puffs written about an advertiser to fill out a special section. And in Providence, R. I., a Journalists Committee has held several meetings with management about specific staffing and policy changes on the *Journal* and *Bulletin*. The Committee acted after surveying a sizable portion of the editorial staff, then compiling the survey and mimeographing it for distribution. [See page 16.]

Guild contract negotiations are still grimly contested in the news media, as are labor contracts in most business enterprises. But the new benefits

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Edwin Diamond, former *Newsweek* senior editor, contributes to leading magazines and recently introduced a news media critique at WTOP-TV, Washington.



that journalists have begun to seek go far beyond the usual guild bargaining points of wages and hours. The new grievances involve, first of all, moral—almost theological—concerns. When the Association of *Tribune* Journalists was formed by reporters at the Minneapolis *Tribune* last February, for example, it carefully stated that the group was not a collective bargaining unit but an agent for bringing “our best thoughts into a dialogue with management.” There had been the usual grumbling at the *Trib* about shortages of staff and space, but there was a new element in the talk. As an association member later explained, “There was a feeling on our part of loss of respect. We were being treated like army privates and the editors were officers; we were to do what we were told and like it and no one gave a damn if we thought our orders were sane or insane.”

On May 25 the *Tribune's* enlisted men and women moved decisively to assert “rights of participation” in the choice of their junior officers: when two *Trib* assistant city editors announced that they planned to leave the paper, the local Guild unit adopted a resolution stating that “reporters, photographers, and copydesk editors should advise and consent to management’s nominations.” The next day management met with the Guild and said that while it was not giving up its prerogatives it was willing to take the staff’s nominations into account. It is a small step for the *Trib*, but a giant leap for American journalism—which more and more is moving toward the model of *Le Monde* and other European publications described by Jean Schwoebel in these pages.

Similarly, the men and women who produce programs for public television have formed an association concerned not with residuals but with, among other subjects, the social content of programs and the racial hiring practices of their industry. And reporters in several cities have founded journalism reviews [see *PASSING COMMENT*, Spring].

The concerns that have stimulated these various activities are immediately recognizable as the concerns that have dominated much of the news covered by media men and women in recent years. Journalists who have followed the fight of parents to decentralize schools, the demands of students to have a say in the investment policies of the uni-

versities, and the blacks’ and radical whites’ challenge to the established institutions of society, have now begun to think about applying to their own lives principles of community control, participatory democracy, and collective action.

The development of this new consciousness is fairly recent. Ten or fifteen years ago, unions battled to win wage increases and to protest mergers, but the way a publication or station was run—from the color scheme of the newsroom walls to the overall editorial policies—remained the prerogative of the owner. The journalist’s attitude was, typically, acquiescent; after all, was it not management’s bat and ball—and ball park (although in broadcasting, the air *does* belong to the public and the station owner has only the loan of it)?

With affluence, the new temper of times, and the seller’s market for young talent, this attitude has changed. Media executives now know (and graduate school studies show) that the brightest young people, on the whole, are not going into journalism, and that even those who are graduated from journalism schools often choose public relations work over reporting jobs. Even more alarming to an editor or news director with proper regard for talent is the attrition rate of good young newsmen and women after two or three years in the business. Money and bylines alone are no longer sufficient inducements; if executives want to attract and keep good young people, they must be attentive to or at least aware of their opinions. As often as not, a good university-trained reporter who is now in his or her late twenties picketed for civil rights while in high school, spent a freshman summer in Mississippi or Appalachia, and sat in at the Dean’s office during senior year—or covered these events for the school paper. Now they are turning reformist toward their own profession.

Recent unrest at the *Wall Street Journal* is a case in point. The *Journal* reached its present eminence in part by hiring good young people right out of college, training them, and giving them the time and the space to develop long, informative reports and trend stories. Now, says an older hand at the paper, “these younger people are much more activist-minded and more willing to needle management.” During the Vietnam Moratorium Day last October, several younger re-

porters wanted to march on Broad street, a block from Wall, with at least one sign saying WALL STREET JOURNALIST FOR THE MORATORIUM. Management's position was that it didn't mind the marching but didn't think the wording of that one sign was proper because it might "raise questions about the *Journal's* objectivity in the reader's mind."

A confrontation on Moratorium Day was avoided—according to one witness, the sign was carried but not held up. But the young activists then dispatched a petition to management asking for a clarification of the *Journal's* "position" on what they could do with their private lives. In response, executives Warren Phillips and Ed Cony issued a memorandum noting that "we must be concerned not only with avoiding bias in our news columns but also with avoiding the appearance of bias." They concluded: "It is the individual's obligation to exercise sufficient judgment to avoid

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## "New benefits sought go far beyond wages..."

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such embarrassment." The younger reporters also have expressed their concern about what the *Journal* does on the editorial page; when the *Journal* ran an editorial that seemed to blame New York City's telephone troubles on allegedly slow-witted welfare mothers hired to operate switchboards, a newsroom caucus told management that reporters didn't want to be associated with a paper that had such mossback views.

The *Journal's* radical "cell" remains largely an *ad hoc* group springing to life when an issue presents itself. At the Minneapolis *Tribune*, however, the new consciousness of younger journalists has manifested itself in a formal organization. Last Fall, by all accounts, the *Tribune* had a morale problem compounded by a high turnover and some admitted paranoia on the part of the staff.

A group of reporters began meeting on Sunday mornings—for a while they were known as the Underground Church—to see if anything beside complaining could be done. The Underground Church members repeated the usual litany of city-room complaints—the need for more phones, better files, more out-of-town exchanges—but they also were concerned with such traditional domains of management as the size of the travel allowance, the company's fiscal and budgetary procedures, and the circulation breakdown by area. More important, the Underground Church challenged the *Tribune's* news judgment, most particularly on those issues that have polarized so much of the country. One young reporter drew up the following indictment:

The *Trib's* sins tend to be those of omission, rather than commission. We sent no one to the Chicago Conspiracy trial despite repeated requests from staffers who wanted to go. We sent no one to Washington last November with the thousands of Minnesotans who participated in the Vietnam Moratorium. We do have a D. C. bureau which handled Moratorium coverage but we did not, like our rival paper, the *Star*, see fit to send anyone on the buses of demonstrators from our state. . . . The November Moratorium was our right-hand, front-page lead story, with a front-page picture of masses of marchers going along peaceably. The story by Chuck Bailey of our D. C. bureau devoted the first five paragraphs to general comments on the demonstration. The next six paragraphs were on the violence that occurred there. Then followed twelve paragraphs on the speeches, color, etc. We used only the official 250,000 figure for the number of participants and did not mention any higher estimates.

On the second front page only one of the five pictures showed a peaceful scene (Coretta King marching). One was rioters getting tear-gassed, another a draft-card burning, another an American flag being carried upside down, and the fourth a flag-burning which turned out, on close inspection, to be counter-demonstrators burning a Vietcong flag. According to our own figures, one-250th of the people at that demonstration got at least three-fifths of the pictures on the second front page and about one-fourth of the main story. . . .

We do, of course, often do a good job breaking a story. Give us a cyclone or a postal strike or the Governor saying he won't run again, and we're all over it. We get the sidebars and the reactions and the whole thing. But in trying to explain what the hell is happening in this society in any larger way—perspective, context, whatever you want to call it—the *Trib* just ain't there."

The Underground Church soon realized it could go in two possible directions: the reporters could start a publication modeled after the *Chicago Journalism Review* which would regularly monitor the local press' performance on stories like the November Moratorium, or they could try to work within the organization by establishing a "dialogue" with management. The Church chose the former course, and plans for a *Twin Cities Journalism Review* were put on the back burner. Early this year, John Cowles, Jr., president of the

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## "Management must be attentive and aware..."

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Minneapolis Star and Tribune Co. (and also the majority owner of *Harper's* magazine), and Bower Hawthorne, vice president and editor of the *Tribune*, were invited to meet with some of the staff and discuss the paper's direction. Hawthorne, meanwhile, had invited all staff members to his own meeting to discuss the paper—the two invitations apparently crossed in the interoffice mail. The meetings took place—"by this time we were communicating like hell," one reporter recalls wryly—and the dissidents formally organized into the Association of *Tribune* Journalists.

The managing editor, Wallace Allen, drew up an extensive questionnaire which was distributed to some 100 staff members; forty-seven returned their forms. Allen's own summary of the responses reflects the low opinion the workers had for the paper and the management. Five of the nineteen "impressions and conclusions" he drew from the replies are especially noteworthy:

—You want a great deal more information about company direction, through direct and personal communication with management up to the highest level.

—Some of you feel strongly that staff members should play a part in policymaking and decision-making. You do not wish to run the newspaper

but you would like to be consulted on what is done and informed in advance of both major and minor decisions.

—You feel that news policy and direction are not being handed down fully or clearly. You have only a vague idea—or no idea—of what we are trying to do and where we are trying to go.

—You feel that our approaches to covering the news and the ways we present it are not up to date. You want to see change and progress in an orderly, responsible but exciting way.

—Many of you feel that the *Tribune* was a progressive and exciting newspaper until about six months or so ago. You indicate that the letdown may have come from confusion in management's mind about news direction when it discovered the silent majority. You feel management switched direction in an attempt to respond to changing social conditions but switched in ways that revealed ignorance of basic issues.

Allen's efforts at communications apparently had a calming effect on the staff, which by and large adopted a "wait and see" attitude. As of late Spring the Association continued to meet every other week or so and was reviving plans for the *Twin Cities Journalism Review*.

The Association of Public Television Producers, another group of journalists who went "above ground" out of a deep concern about their professional lives, has also become engaged in management matters. Men and women on every level in public television are worried about the continued unfettered operation of noncommercial TV in the United States, especially because the new Corporation for Public Broadcasting has to go to Congress each year for funds. The Association came forward during Congressional hearings last year to discuss alternative plans for financing public TV; its spokesman, Alvin Perlmutter, a National Educational Television producer, told the Pastore Committee that he personally favored financing PTV by a tax on the profits of the commercial networks rather than the present arrangement in which public TV is dependent on the goodwill of 535 Congressmen. Perlmutter was rewarded with a lecture from Senator Pastore, advising him not to bite the hand that is feeding him. More recently, the Association publicly protested the decision of some local public TV stations not to show the NET documentary *Who Invited US?*, a highly critical study of U.S. foreign policy. Like the reporters at the Minneapolis *Tribune*, the

## The Providence journalists committee

□ One day last July Nick Mottern, thirty-one-year-old labor reporter for the *Providence Journal*, was sitting at his typewriter pondering the number of newsmen who had left the paper and the dissatisfaction that many colleagues had voiced about their work. He turned to a colleague at the desk behind him and said, "Why don't we do something about things here?" They invited other reporters for the morning *Journal* and its sister paper, the evening *Bulletin*, to meet in a cafeteria downstairs. Out of that meeting came a Journalists Committee, which surveyed staff concerns and began meeting with editors. It also compiled a twenty-one-page mimeographed pamphlet titled "Proposals for the Improvement of the Providence *Journal* and the evening *Bulletin*." Among its points:

The Providence *Journal* has held a relatively high reputation for competent journalism, but the . . . Committee believes that it is not doing enough to meet the needs of its readers, that it is not living up to its reputation . . . ; the size and organization of the news staffs do not allow the newspapers to go far enough beyond the reporting of events and reaction to events to tell the people of Rhode Island what they need to know to improve their lives and their state. . . .

In our talks with the editors, it became apparent that they believe the staple of the newspapers to be their coverage of major and minor events, governmental activity, public statements, and social news. We recognize the importance of this type of coverage, and we do not recommend that it be abandoned. We do believe that changes must be made to permit more in-depth and investigative reporting. . . .

Rhode Island is a stronghold for the Mafia. To think that its ability to flourish here is not made possible by the cooperation of government and business is naïve. It is also naïve to believe that the Mafia does not make the state more susceptible to forms of corruption not directly related to organized crime. . . . We believe there are sufficient projects to keep an investigative reporting team busy indefinitely. Some are:

- Conflict of interest in the General Assembly.
- The Providence Police Department.
- The financial affairs of Progress for Providence.
- The structure of state political parties and where they get their money.
- The relationships of prominent persons to the underworld.
- The underworld influence at Rhode Island race tracks.
- A study of the credentials and activities of judges and an examination of their decisions for evidence of conflicts of interest.
- Interlocking business directorates.

- The operation of credit unions in the state.
- The connections of unions to the underworld.
- An examination of governmental construction contract awards that would include an investigation of bidding and dead-line enforcement procedures. . . .

Consumer affairs receives spotty coverage, but it is a subject of high interest to every reader. Government has begun to recognize the political necessity and advantage of working for the consumer, and we believe it is in line with the newspapers' interest and responsibility to do likewise. . . . A recent *Journal* story with extremely high reader interest was Michael Madden's dissection of the local funeral business. Stories that might be developed include:

- The varying costs of auto repair and body work.
- Safety of appliances.
- Costs of medicine.
- Food preparation and handling in restaurants.
- Food clubs and group buying.
- Utility costs.
- Analysis and comparison of insurance plans.
- Health, reducing and physical fitness clubs.
- Service costs on appliance repair.
- Costs of basic legal services. . . .

We propose that a post be established on the *Bulletin* for a consumer affairs reporter and that a *Journal* reporter or reporters be assigned on a continuing basis to stories in this area. . . .

In order to give the city editor more time for planning and working with reporters, we suggest that the bulk of the reading of advance copy be done by the assistant city editor and that the review of press releases and related work be done by a reporter or copy editor. . . .

The committee requests that members of various staffs be allowed to attend meetings held between the editors and the publisher in order to understand better the operation of the newspapers and to offer the viewpoint of the staffs in discussions of news policy. These representatives would be selected by their fellow staff members for a specified period. . . .

Some changes have resulted from Committee activities, says Charles H. Spilman, *Journal* managing editor. They include more stories with bylines, modifications in reporter training procedures, and regular staff meetings. "But," he confesses, "nothing of a major nature." He adds: "I think the activities have been valuable."

Some of Spilman's reporters are less enthusiastic. Mottern has resigned from the paper, and the Journalists Committee, reiterating concern about "the quality, the values, the standards, the judgments, the honesty, and the integrity of these newspapers," in April began publication of an eight-page local review called *The Journalists Newsletter*, described as "the first of what we intend to be a continuing series of critical reports on the newspapers we work for." Copies were distributed free to selected individuals and organizations.



public TV producers want to see certain stories run—and they are prepared to challenge past assumptions about whether the people who have the bat and ball can make all the rules of the game.

The women's movement at *Newsweek* also has been willing to try its case in public. The conditions that the *Newsweek* women found objectionable—segregation of women into the scut work of research, the lack of writing opportunities (fifty male writers to one woman), and the general atmosphere of exclusion—had for years existed unopposed except by one or two editors. In the last year or two, however, many of the young women had been covering the black revolution and student unrest. As reporters they had listened to the rhetoric of “power to the people”; they had been “used” by militants who staged news conferences and other media events to get across their messages. When the *Newsweek* women decided to press their collective claims they arranged a media event: they timed the release of their complaint to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in Washington to coincide with the Monday morning newsstand appearance of the *Newsweek* cover story “Women in Revolt.” They called a news conference and phoned contacts at other news organizations to insure full coverage. Then they appeared in force, well groomed and intelligent, flanking their lawyer, a young, attractive black woman named Eleanor Holmes Norton. Their widely covered action had the desired effect, galvanizing the top echelon of *Newsweek* into a long series of meetings with the women and winning from management pledges to open the entire editorial hierarchy to women.

The editor may justifiably grumble that the women should have come to his office first, but the women believe it was the public nature of their action that produced results. Their experience replicates that of a Minneapolis *Tribune* reporter who now believes the “only power that we staff members really have in these matters is the power to embarrass management.” This power also was demonstrated last March when a group called Media Women flooded into the office of the *Ladies' Home Journal's* editor and publisher, John Mack Carter, to stage the first “liberation” of a mass magazine. The resulting publicity may not have

immediately hurt the *Journal's* advertising revenues or circulation, but it certainly affected that evanescent quality known as aura—and it made many readers who heretofore had not paid much attention to the feminist cause conscious of the magazine's assumptions.

For the time being at least, the tactics of “liberation” have been the exception rather than the rule. If there is a pattern in developments around the country, it is the tactic of internally rather than publicly making the case for a larger staff role in policymaking. Thus, some sixty New York *Post* activists (over as well as under thirty) have been meeting with the *Post's* publisher, Mrs. Dorothy Schiff, to force a break from the penurious policies and lackluster journalism of the past. The reporters have asked for more specialist beats, a larger travel budget, more black and Puerto Rican staff, and more coverage of minority groups. At the New York *Times* a loose confederation of reporters and editors have also met to discuss a long list of grievances, some of them water-cooler complaints but others centering on the *Times's* coverage of politics, race, the Chicago Conspiracy trial,

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### “The power to embarrass management...”

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and the Black Panthers. Some of the *Times* reporters are chafing under what they consider the harsh yoke of Managing Editor A. M. Rosenthal and his bullpen editors, and one step being considered calls for the selection or election—in the *Le Monde* and Minneapolis models—of a top editor.

And in Philadelphia, the senior editors of the *Bulletin* have been conducting regular Monday afternoon “seminars” with some fifteen of the younger—and more activist-minded—staff reporters. The weekly seminars began last March after managing editor George Packard had heard complaints from staff members that story suggestions and opinions about news coverage were not “trick-



ling upward." A typical meeting allows equal time for a senior editor to explain his particular operation (news desk, photo assignments, etc.) and for reporters to ask questions or otherwise respond. The trickle—some say, torrent—of underclass feelings loosed by the seminars has already resulted in some changes in the way the *Bulletin* handles racial identifications in stories. *Bulletin* editors are also opening up channels so that younger reporters can get story ideas into the paper's new "Enterprise" page, and no one seems more satisfied with these developments than Packard himself.

A number of issues could transform these informal internal discussions into overt action

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## "Proprietors have a selfish interest in listening..."

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groups. Working reporters have been made visibly nervous by recent efforts to subpoena reporters' notes, raw files, and unused film [PASSING COMMENT, Spring]. The *Wall Street Journal* "cell" and the Association of *Tribune* Journalists, among others, have formally protested to their managements about cooperating in such government fishing expeditions. More significantly, two groups of journalists, cutting across corporate and media lines, have banded together on the subpoena issue. One group consists of some seventy black men and women journalists who placed an ad to announce their intention to oppose the Government's efforts (the Government's first target in efforts to obtain reporters' notes was a black journalist for the *New York Times*, Earl Caldwell).

The second group, called the Reporter's Committee on Freedom of the Press, consists of both black and white newsmen, and J. Anthony Lukas of the *New York Times* has been one of its early organizers. The Reporter's Committee met early in March at the Georgetown University Law Center in Washington. The discussions—attended by men from the *Washington Star*, the *Washington*

*Post*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, the *Los Angeles Times*, NBC, and CBS—reflected some of the feelings of staff men that interests of management and employees may not always be congruent in the matter of subpoenas. Rather than rely on lawyers of their individuals companies and corporations—who by and large have been uncertain trumpets in recent months—the Georgetown group wants to explore the legal thickets of the subpoena issue directly with law schools and scholars. Already, the group is cooperating with the Georgetown Law Center on an information center and clearing house, and with Stanford University on a legal study of the whole area of confidential material.

Two other issues could also serve to "radicalize" the working press. One issue is race. Black reporters in the San Francisco area and in New York City have organized their own associations, partly to get together to talk about matters of common interest and occasionally to speak out with a collective voice. The other radicalizing issue is the war in Indochina. Shortly after Mr. Nixon ordered American troops into Cambodia, more than 150 *Newsweek* employees met to debate whether they should bring pressure on their magazine to come out against the war; one form of action considered was an anti-war advertisement in *Newsweek*. At the *New York Daily News* more than 100 editorial employees attempted to place just such an ad in their paper, but were refused space by the paper even though they had collected \$1,100 to pay for it. The *Daily Newsmen* promptly took their ad to the *New York Times*, where it was accepted—double embarrassment for the *News'* management.

As of mid-1970, then media activists had a great deal in their favor, including management's fear of a talent drain and its abhorrence of adverse publicity. Ultimately, too, they can count on the *amour propre* of the ownership: the proprietors have a selfish interest in listening. John Cowles, Jr., for example, told his *Tribune* reporters that it wasn't at all pleasant to hear, in his words, that he was "the captain of the *Titanic*." Perhaps a "dialogue" can achieve a new arrangement of authority that recognizes the best qualities of passion, spontaneity, and social concerns of the younger journalists while preserving the established professional virtues of fair play and balance.

## How influential is TV news?

"Writers on advertising, publicity, political campaigns, propaganda, and similar topics are constantly attributing vastly exaggerated possibilities and powers to the fields they describe," Wilbur L. Schramm wrote in *The Process and Effects of Mass Communications*. Is television one of these fields? How powerful is it as a journalistic medium?

The study report *Mass Media and Violence*, released last January by the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, concluded that so little evidence is available on these points that basic research is urgently needed. A conference of the International Broadcast Institute March 16-18 at the Villa Fiorio, near Rome, reached the same conclusion.

Participants, who included journalists and social scientists from Europe, Africa, Japan, and North America, discussed a number of subjects. Portions of their proceedings dealing with the quality of TV coverage, with research on the effects of TV as a journalistic medium, and with the need for more research are excerpted below.

DR. ERWIN K. SCHEUCH (Director, Institute for Comparative Social Studies, University of Cologne, Germany): There are two widespread beliefs about TV as a news medium: 1) TV is inferior, at least in volume of news, to the printed media; 2) commercial TV is inferior to public TV systems in public affairs programs. Two studies by the Institute for Research in Mass Communication at Cologne University show these beliefs to be either wrong or oversimplified.

Between April and May, 1965, seven TV stations within the Pittsburgh area of the United States, and three channels in the Cologne area, were compared. On the average, the Pittsburgh stations devoted 11.4 per cent of their total time to newscasts, while the Cologne stations—all of them public TV—used 12.2 per cent of their time

for news. A greater difference existed with respect to other formats or programming. Documentaries and "shows" concerned with political events (sometimes similar in format to the British *That Was the Week That Was*) occupied an average of 7.4 per cent of network time in Pittsburgh, and 10.8 per cent of the time in Cologne; political discussions and commentaries took merely .7 per cent of the time in Pittsburgh, and 3.5 per cent of the time in Cologne. These differences became more pronounced when one compared programming during prime time. Thus, the real difference between the systems was not in their news programming, but in other forms of political coverage.

In a second study of programming, during a sample of days a complete count was taken of news items as they appeared in newspapers and

on TV in West Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and Britain. The TV networks covered were ARD and ZDF (German), Nederland 1 (Netherlands), RTB français and RTB flamand (Belgium), ORTF, 1. chaine (France), BBC I, BBC II, and ITV (Britain). In every one of these countries three "serious" daily papers plus one tabloid were included in the analyses. In most countries the total volume of information transmitted by TV was close to or a bit more than that of the tabloids of the respective countries, and by far lower than that of the "serious" daily papers. . . . Thus in any evaluation of TV as a medium for political information, TV should be seen as supplementary to the quality printed media.

DR. ITHIEL DE SOLA POOL (Chairman, Department of Political Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology): One hears frequently about the small amount of news that can be gotten into a TV newscast, and Professor Scheuch's figures point out this criticism is only partially valid. At the same time, it is a criticism of most of the world's newspapers. It applies to all except a few large documentary newspapers read by a few members of the political class. I would like to suggest, however, that it may be a transitory problem.

A reverse problem exists increasingly: the vast maw of TV—the enormous amount of time that needs to be filled. This is primarily a problem in the entertainment field, where one of the most frequent explanations for low quality of entertainment material is that there aren't enough good people to produce all the material needed. As the number of channels increases we begin to see this problem arising for public affairs material, too. The ability to find material that is cheap enough—the preparation of documentaries is an expensive process—and at the same time attractive enough to hold an audience will increasingly become a problem, as it has in the United States on radio.

One of the disadvantages of TV as against any print medium is that it has no easy way of satisfying many minorities at once. You cannot run small, modest stories on this and that, expecting that people will pick and choose among them. In a newspaper the reader will pick the ones he wants and leave 75 per cent of the paper unread. TV

must go for the audience as a whole. For any particular audience at any particular moment there is no possibility of providing diverse coverage for each of a lot of things, each of which is attractive to only a small part of the audience. It is hard to see how it could be possible for a medium that does not carry different stories in parallel as in the form of retrievable print to carry enough information.

Another point has to do with the problem of editorial judgment—a problem on which I suspect we probably have 100 per cent agreement here. The substitution of any kind of outside supervisory bodies' judgment for that of the man who is doing the job is bound to be deleterious, no matter how fine the principles and terms under which this exercise of supervision is supposed to

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## *"No easy way of satisfying many minorities..."*

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be carried out. If this were not a panel about TV but a meeting of restaurateurs, let us say, and somebody raised a problem analogous to the ill effects of violence on TV—the ill effects of too much cholesterol in the diet or whatever it might be—I could well imagine people arguing about whether some particular rich dessert should be served or not. That would clearly be an irrelevant question, because the real question would not be any individual dish, but the diet. In the same way I think we have to talk about the TV diet; you can have individual editorial judgments that are 100 per cent judicious and wise and based upon considerations of news value and appeal, and they can add up to a diet which is imbalanced.

That is a very critical problem. It is the problem that is referred to when people talk about the focus of TV on the visual, or the focus on violence. Every TV reporter who has been in Vietnam and to whom I have spoken says that the rockets he got from home kept saying, "Where is the blood

and guts? You've got too much dull stuff about local politics." The result may have been great reporting but a misleading diet. The problem of the diet is not resolved by saying that the professionals' editorial judgment has to be decisive—and it does have to be decisive. The problem is one of "what is the structure of the situation that results when good judgments piled up day after day somehow produce an unbalanced diet?"

One can understand the politician who tries—as President Nixon did in his November 3 speech—to make a statement of public policy but finds that he cannot do it without its becoming an item of controversy. That is one of the things that makes politicians angry at the media. But the media are doing exactly what they should be doing news story by news story. They are recognizing the issues, identifying issues, and thereby making them issues. The power of TV is the immediacy, the rapidity, the overwhelming force that it has in doing this, in taking an event and immediately turning it into an issue on which sides are chosen. That is one of the problems of the diet, independent of the judgment made on an individual news item.

ELMER LOWER (President, News, Special Events, and Public Affairs, American Broadcasting Company): In 1968, when there was a question about the content of violence in news programming, I had a survey done of all ABC News coverage from September 1, 1967, to August 30, 1968. I wanted to determine if we had—as some critics alleged—given disproportionate coverage to violent events. The survey showed that 91 per cent of the stories we reported on had nothing at all to do with violence. And of the remaining 9 per cent which did deal with violence—some rather remotely—the actual depiction of acts of violence on the home screen was extremely rare.

After the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, I personally screened videotapes of all our Chicago convention coverage and I found that by actual minute-and-second count, only 1.1 per cent of our total coverage of the Democratic convention was devoted to film or tape of disorders involving the police and dissenters.

I suspect many of our critics suffer from severe

cases of selective perception. For an opponent of a position to see a supporter on the air is sometimes a jarring experience. He remembers that which he disagrees with more readily than that which reinforces his own attitudes. Also, some viewers feel personally offended when we bring them disheartening news.

DR. JAMES D. HALLORAN (Director, Centre for Mass Communication Research, University of Leicester, England): We did some work on some programs put on by one of the companies in England on the nature of prejudice, and we found this was a perfect example of selective perception

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## *"Wise judgments can add up to a diet imbalance..."*

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of news. Viewers just used these messages—which were, in a sense, an attempt to produce a more enlightened view—to support their own position.

I wonder if we might look at the way in which the media actually create concern about such issues as violence and law and order rather than concentrate our discussions on violence in the media in terms of the media creating violence. There could be a slightly ironic twist to this, for perhaps television and the media generally are being blamed for creating a problem because of the way they have presented it. The way the media present criminal statistics and crime generally is a case in point. To me, rather than searching for direct effects in the conventional manner it is more important to look at the role of the media in defining problems, emphasizing issues, posing alternatives, and creating parameters of debate.

One final point: Dr. Scheuch has mentioned the distinction between current affairs and hard news and suggested that the thing we ought to be looking at because of the volume factor was current affairs rather than hard news. But I wonder if volume or amount of output is in fact the appro-



appropriate criterion. Another criterion, equally important, is the credibility or authority which the audience give to these presentations. As far as we can see—from research—people give a far higher credibility rating to news than they do to current affairs, so in a sense this may make news far more important. There is much more to the effects of these programs than one can judge from straightforward amounts and quantities.

CHRISTOPHER KOLADE (Director of Programmes, Nigerian Broadcasting Company): I would like to call attention to the television coverage of foreign news. This is very important to us in Africa at the moment because we are dependent to a very large extent on foreign sources for our foreign news. The news editor collects a foreign film and he looks through it and he is already faced with the editorial judgment of somebody else; somebody else has selected what items to cover and how to cover them. Now he has to make a second selection of what in this great welter of stuff he is going to use, and why, and how. We have suffered through a situation in Nigeria in the last three years which has opened the eyes of those of us in broadcasting to the dangers of this situation, because you accept a film coverage of the events in Vietnam or the events in the Middle East as the truth, because this is a majority medium, as we say. And suddenly the next day, you get a film coverage by the same foreign newsfilm company of an event in Nigeria, and you begin to ask yourself whether the infallibility of this foreign newsfilm company is not something that you doubt.

We are beginning to wonder whether we have been giving a distorted view of the world to our viewers all the time. And this is complicated even further by the fact that in our society you cannot isolate television news from the rest of the programming, much of which, again, is foreign: the American serials, the things produced in Britain, and now the things produced in France and other places—there are people producing programs specifically for foreign markets, people even in non-English-speaking countries producing programs specifically for showing in Nigeria. And you find that the total image in the Nigerians' mind of the American scene—the FBI series—lends great sup-

port and strength to the film of the assassination of Martin Luther King.

POOL: A problem I would like to see discussed is that television news cannot afford the kind of infrastructure that the news media as a whole have had for the handling of various kinds of specialized news covering the entire world. This is relevant to the question of how many different parallel competing services there can be. The newspapers in their heyday built up a certain pattern of news coverage, involving foreign correspondents and various kinds of specialists. Many people have talked about the decline of newspapers and their economic problem. With that problem comes the question of who is going to support this basic infrastructure. To the extent that TV sees its role as "supplemental," "complementary,"—or "parasitic"—with TV doing a spot, front-page job with occasional specials, this raises a question of where do we get the large body of specialized expertise that has to be on tap to replace the instantaneous reaction of the experienced newsmen.

SIG MICKELSON (former Vice President of Time-Life Broadcast, Inc.): The feeling seems to be widespread that this budgetary problem is such a severe one that it can't be overcome. Actually my impression is that in a period of staff development that has lasted some twenty years, the American networks and many stations have developed some pretty competent core staff personnel. For the most part they are men of competence and background. You can put any of the network staffs against the *New York Times* or the wire services or any other staff and they come out pretty well, or they may even have generally better personnel, and I suspect that this is equally true of the BBC.

SIR GEOFFREY COX (Deputy Chairman, Yorkshire Television, Ltd., England): I think you ought to make an important qualification there, and examine whether you have a radio service backing your television service. It is quite impossible in the case of television which has no radio service to sustain a large corps of specialists. It isn't a question of money, although that comes into it; it's a question of keeping them active.



MICKELSON: We have been talking largely, I think, in terms of the very existence of television, and many of the effects we have been talking about have been effects which arise out of its existence. But very soon we should take an additional step and find out the effect not of the medium itself but of its content.

Three correspondents for the *Sunday Times* of London who did that magnificent book *American Melodrama*, on the election of 1968, refer to five social phenomena in the U. S. commonly linked in some way to television: the race riots, political assassinations, the rise in the incidence of crime, violence and demonstrations in the streets, and the generation gap. They point out that race riots in the U. S. occurred as early as the 1820s, and

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## "Viewers suffer from selective perception..."

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some of them date back to the Revolutionary War period. Political assassinations come in minor waves, and the two political assassinations in 1968 are simply a continuation of a phenomenon in the country which dates back more than a hundred years to the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. The incidence of crime, of course, depends upon reporting—and the statistics used—and nobody really knows whether we have more "crime" now because we have better reporting or whether there actually is more crime. The authors insist there hasn't been a significant increase.

The most violent mass demonstrations the U.S. ever had in the streets came in the 1860s, when New York was an armed camp during riots over recruitment of troops for the Civil War, and the authors insist that there hasn't been any real increase in use of the mass demonstration technique since television has had cameras on the scene. They further point out that the events in Chicago were likely to take place whether or not there were television cameras or film cameras. Actually there

were no electronic cameras, only film cameras, because of a telephone strike at the time. So they say that of the five social phenomena the only one in which television might have been a causal factor was the generation gap.

If this is true, then what does the content of TV news and information programs actually do? We know that a very large volume of information is being thrown at masses of people who never in the past have been subjected to such a bombardment. But the question then is does it stick more coming from a television receiver than from a newspaper or by word of mouth? Or does it hit and roll off? Does the content of television news programs stimulate the person to action more than he had been stimulated before or does it simply supply him with a little broader information base? Or does it make any contribution to the sum of his knowledge? Has it made him more interested in politics or less interested in politics? I was guilty in the 1950s of insisting that the public is much better informed and much more interested in politics, and I cited statistics showing that more people were voting in national elections than ever before, that there was a rising curve of participation in politics—except that the rising curve suddenly leveled off in 1964 and remained level in 1968. By then, television had achieved almost 100 per cent saturation. So does television actually stimulate additional voting? Does television play more than a relatively minor role in the political impact? It probably does but it would be useful to know more.

JULIAN CRITCHLEY (TV critic, the *Times* of London): Here is something you can measure: the Nigerian war lasted for three years. Until the last six months of that war, speaking in terms of public opinion, nobody in Britain really cared less. There were the general orthodox views, one of support for the federal regime in Nigeria, but nobody felt strongly about this in any particular way. But then film of starving and dying children, which we saw at very great length in an enormous exposure on British television, caused a measurable change in attitudes toward the war in Nigeria. It might be argued that this raised money for Biafra and as a consequence the war was pro-

longed. But here is something that is in fact measurable in terms of what the British people actually felt about an international issue.

HALLORAN: Some of our recent research has indicated that the Biafra issue was, of ten or eleven issues, the central news issue over a period of time and that the aspect young children had the most knowledge about was the starving children. This had been their point of identification. Another rather interesting piece of information came out of this research that will interest our American colleagues: when asked who was fighting in Biafra, 17 per cent of our subjects said "the Americans."

KAARLE NORDENSTRENG (Head of Research, Finnish Broadcasting Corporation): What research in Scandinavia has proved about the impact of television is that it really is a very effective means of reinforcement of attitudes. Even if we try to change them, people are selective in perception; as we know from other studies they pick up points which are in harmony with their own points of view. What is not possible is to change their attitudes—at least in the short run. Maybe in the long run, by the means of indoctrination; that is introducing a series of programs, usually a fiction type introducing some social elements as in American serials which repeatedly show society in a certain stereotyped way, change can be produced.

Another way of long-range indoctrination through the mass media of which we have some evidence is the setting of a frame of reference regarding some social issues or news events—exactly the way indicated by James Halloran's demonstration study. This means that the media influence public discussion and "public opinion" with a certain approach to an issue—e.g. violence in a demonstration or the "revolutionary tendency" of television (suggested by the Right-wing press in many European countries, not the least in Finland). This can be called manipulation by agenda-setting.

But in the short run, newscasts and even current affairs programs, hardly can change attitudes. What they can really do, according to research evidence, is convey information—some pieces of evidence of the everyday world, and some knowl-

edge. A very modest amount of knowledge has been transmitted to a large audience, but still relatively more knowledge has been transmitted than attitudes have been changed. For instance, we found that knowledge in higher social strata of conditions in factories was just nonexistent, and after a half-fictional, half-documentary story of a debate among factory people about whether to go on strike or not the whole picture of the working class changed in the mind of the upper class. We could find a considerable restructuring of views toward the overall community. The upper class didn't become socialist or leftist but they got another view of social reality.

But while conveying information is possible, there is a problem of comprehension. We usually convey information in a way that is remote from and too abstract for ordinary people, especially on sociopolitical issues. People viewing seem to believe what is said but they don't understand the implications, possibly because we fail to put the facts into proper context.

HALLORAN: I am not quite sure of what you mean by comprehension, but I sometimes think that in social sciences when looking generally at the media we don't make an adequate distinction between effects and effectiveness. People may not understand the program, may not get the full mes-

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*"The news media  
may circumscribe  
the debate..."*

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sage, but they still can take a lot away from it, they still can latch onto some incidents, and the program can have impact. It is sometimes said that violence has been perfectly acceptable in a program because it is cushioned by the context or imbedded in the plot. This is fine for those who understood the plot and those who appreciate the context. But what about those who don't see and understand and just come away from the experi-

ence with one particular incident?

On one occasion we got together producers of children's programs from all over Europe, showed them a program, and asked them to assess how children would react to this. They didn't know that we had already assessed the children's reactions. When we compared the two sets of reactions we found greater discrepancies on cognitive measures than on affective measures. There was a clear tendency for producers to overestimate the child's ability to understand and retain information.

The idea of the media not having a great deal of influence can be supported by certain studies but I suggest that maybe the theoretical models that have been used in these studies are not always appropriate. I think we ought to do research not so much on the media changing attitudes but on the media drawing the parameters for the total debate, defining problems, selecting some issues, ignoring others. There is some indication that young people are increasingly relying on television as the main source of information. We must ask, "What is the sort of information being given? What sort of issue is being put forward as vital and important in our society?"

Cox: You said the effect of television is not to create new attitudes, but in a sense to reinforce attitudes. But something formulates those attitudes to begin with. Until now presumably they have been formulated either by the family environment or by other media of communication like the press. Have we not got to ask ourselves now to what extent is television itself beginning to formulate the attitudes that then it reinforces? Is there any evidence on this?

HALLORAN: We can assume, I think, that most young children or children in their teens have a wish to belong to a peer group. Now, it is not that television makes them want to belong to these peer groups, but television may outline and give definitions of and approval to a certain sort of behavior that is portrayed as necessary if they are to be accepted in these peer groups. If you want to belong this is the style, this is the sort of behavior and attitudes that are appropriate.

POOL: The research on the effects of TV is grossly inadequate, partly because it is such a complicated matter. I just noted down here half a dozen hypotheses—half a dozen impressions that a lot of people have as to the effects of television—and there isn't one about which anyone can say conclusively, "Yes, it had this effect," or "No, it hasn't had this effect," although for any one of them there is some evidence. One effect is the broadening of the scope of people's experience of things outside the primary environment. Young people today understand the moon in a way that certainly they wouldn't have if it hadn't been for television. People in developed countries understand what life is in an underdeveloped country because they see shots of villages, though most people have never been abroad. TV provides images of entirely different ways of life or environments. That is one hypothesis: that television has broadened the scope of understanding of things that are unfamiliar.

A second hypothesis that is frequently asserted and I think is probably right is that TV has produced a fundamentally changed attitude toward war; people will never again accept war in the same way. I don't mean they will never fight a war again, but that they will never accept war in the same way now that they see it as a daily experience, and a moving one.

A third hypothesis is that television personalizes politics; it makes the personality of the politician a more significant factor.

A fourth hypothesis is that TV has hastened the development of the consumer orientation. Certainly television has made people aware of living standards. Whether TV carries advertising and perhaps even when it does not, it shows what is available to the consumer.

Fifth is the notion that television produces earlier socialization or maturation in children. Television is essentially addressed to the whole family, to the total community; therefore children are seeing adult fare and they are learning more about sex and politics and all sorts of adult things at a very early age, in a way that they didn't read them carefully.

Sixth is the notion that television intensifies fads. Because it is such a powerful medium and it

disseminates information more rapidly it gets a new thing adopted more quickly. Since a lot of new things wear themselves out after a while, it increases the speed of waves of fashion interest.

Any one one of these hypotheses could be the subject of research, but it would be pretty hard to design a study that would be conclusive on any one of them. It is also fair to say that while there have been people who have looked at all of these things, there certainly has been no really definitive research on any of them.

SCHEUCH: Just to carry this further: there is no direct evidence—but some indirect evidence—about the rise in knowledge about the personnel in politics. In this connection TV appears to have a specific function in helping the public to label public figures as pleasant or repugnant.

HALLORAN: While we normally talk about television as a visual medium, we have some research that shows that the commentary factor was apparently the most important in retaining information and in change of attitude. Of course, this could be a gross oversimplification, because one has to look at the location of the words. The words could have been put over particularly salient pictures and so on. However, there are one or two pieces of research showing that we tend to underestimate the verbal component of what is normally seen as a visual medium. . . .

DR. POMPEO ABRUZZINI (Head of Audience Research, Radiotelevisione Italiana, Italy): We did some experiments in presentation of news by an announcer, by a journalist, and by film clips, and we found that presentation of political news by a journalist is more effective than that by an announcer, but presentation of political news by film is not more effective. Maybe it is remembered better, but it is not effective because the image is often different from the sound—so much different that people are attracted by the images and don't follow the sound. News on other subjects may be better with film, but for political news a film may distract. Sometimes we lose in the process of communications what we want to communicate.

HALLORAN: In one of our recent studies of the television activities of about 350 delinquents compared to a similar number of nondelinquents, we found that the actual media exposure of the delinquents is not particularly different from that of the nondelinquents. But some of their preferences and identification are. They have a higher preference for aggressive hero figures, and for action and adventure-type programs. But the major difference was in terms of the general framework again, in what may loosely be called a framework and background of their lives. They talk less about what

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*"It appears TV  
can help to label  
public figures..."*

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they see, to their parents, their brothers and sisters, their teachers, and kids in the playground. It would appear on the surface that the delinquent uses TV in a different way—his filtering equipment is different.

We have been looking at the possibility of doing some research on violence that might get away from the normal idea of violence producing violence, to violence stemming from frustration, which is caused by TV stimulating aspirations and desires that cannot be met. For some groups it's all right because they can achieve those goals. For certain other groups on the whole, the group where delinquency flourishes, the media may play an important part in this connection, particularly in a commercial setting.

NIGEL RYAN (Editor, Independent Television News, Ltd., England): I think the classic case of the ineffectiveness of the medium is the development of racial prejudice in Britain. The whole weight of broadcasting was thrown for years against this. Every single program that was done was designed to diminish prejudice. If you were to attack broadcasting in Britain as not having been objective on any issue, I would say that it was



here, in constant preaching and in the careful avoidance of the immigration issue for years.

HALLORAN: I don't know, but I know that we can't just look at the role of the media in terms of documentaries. We have to look at general stereotyping, labeling by the press in particular. At the local level this could be extremely important to people when they hear about colored people moving into an area, people about whom they have little previous personal knowledge.

One point of further concern. Some people, perhaps a minority, but including all of us here, are multimedia people, and we have all sorts of checks built in. But with some of the children we studied, we found that further down the age scale, they placed more and more reliance on television; if they are in certain socioeconomic categories this can be the sole source of their information on certain important topics. I sometimes wonder if our multimedia orientation prevents us from seeing the real nature of the problem.

JOHN GRIST (Head of Current Affairs Group, British Broadcasting Corporation, England): I think what really worries me about television in my personal capacity is the basic problem about democracy, and the sense that television is very largely action-oriented in terms of what goes on the screen; you want moving pictures, the whole thing is based on movement. Either that or it is based on some form of confrontation. Now, one of the strengths of Western democracy is that it is neither based on action nor upon confrontation leading to defeat or victory. The basis of Western democracy is small groups of people, usually having been elected, arguing and finding some form of compromise situation which is reasonably satisfactory to the organized groups of society. This seems to me to be the main theme on which life, certainly in Britain, is based. One of the real problems is that we seem to be dealing so much in television with romantic conceptions—there are elements of fantasy about confrontation and about action which are anti-democratic.

Cox: The trouble, as I see it, is that television occupies so much of people's time. I don't know

whether there are any statistics to prove it, but my hunch would be that people in the old days might have read the newspaper when they got home—even people who had had an ordinary day in the factory. Now they don't read the newspaper when they get home, they simply watch television, and television is not a medium that can satisfactorily deal with complicated affairs.

CRITCHLEY: I would like to make one other point, and that is that I think there is a very strong case for an extension of the press council idea to include complaints on television—if for no other reason than the enormous number of complaints about television, most of which are misdirected. Let's have a press council, let's have some sort of independent body that will be able to give some sort of view.

SCHEUCH: I don't think the press council will be able to do much of a job, and I don't think the guild concept or self-control will work. Specifically, among people with academic qualifications,

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## *"Cassettes and CATV will increase areas of choice..."*

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modern societies appear to regress to medieval forms: everybody wants to control himself, and nobody wants to be at the service of the public. The only solution I can see is that television will lose its role as a majority medium, that either there are a sufficient number of channels available so that you select your channel much as you select your newspaper—clearly expecting what you are getting there—or that television is undercut by the cassette and wire. That is, you supplement the programming through your own programming, where you buy your cassette much as a paperback book and plug it in at a time of your choice.

POOL: It seems to me that any solution given today in a period of monopoly is irrelevant and

might even become institutionalized and therefore dangerous, because it will persist into a period where the natural control will be the multiplication of channels in competition. I think we do know some things about the impact of the media, and I agree completely that they do not easily change basic cognitive structures.

HALLORAN: Quite often multiplicity of outlets results in more of the same sort of thing. If you take a particular pattern of choices at any given time, the existence of a number of channels offering different fare could result in a hardening of choices. For some this might mean a permanent diet of undemanding material. It has always worried me a little that people seem to assume automatically that the existence of many channels will in fact produce untold benefits. It is possible that diversity may best be obtained through monopoly. I need convincing on this point.

GRIST: Particularly in reference to this, as I see it, the cassette revolution and cable TV will increase the area of choice of entertainment. What we are talking about is news and current affairs. Now this is a very expensive business, news and current affairs, and it is getting more expensive; the thing that has happened to most of it in America will be happening in Europe to everybody as they go from black and white into color. This will tend to increase the cost by a factor of more than two. I am not sure that, however many channels are available, societies in Europe will be able to afford many more than, say, three competing channels of news and current affairs.

MICKELSON: We have seen the development of diversity in radio in the U. S. My personal opinion is that it has been very good. In the New York area we have now fifty or sixty radio stations, and in Boston probably forty. Most of them are, from my point of view and for my taste, bad. There are the rock and rollers and they cater, to my mind, to the lowest common denominator in taste. But at the same time in New York we have two all-news stations; one FM station which devotes itself almost exclusively to egghead lectures and discussions and book reviews and the like; we

have three or four devoted exclusively to serious music; we have one suburban station in the area where I live which calls itself the "top forty station" and it plays what it regards as the top forty classical music selections in sequence.

With respect to television, I personally think that a fourth network, delivering a national and international news service, is probably never going to work, but as I visualize the upcoming technological developments, I believe there will be increased emphasis on regionalization and localization. I had occasion to sit in some meetings recently discussing a Bedford-Stuyvesant project. Bedford-Stuyvesant is a depressed, largely black area in Brooklyn with a population of about 400,000. There are roughly 150,000 dwelling units

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*"Without impartial research we are in for more trouble..."*

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there, and while it is a depressed area there is apparently enough disposable income to support some kind of a community news-information service. A discussion occurred as to whether it might be useful to set up a head-end antenna within Bedford-Stuyvesant, geared into a CATV system using cable or short-range microwave.

Now, the advantage of something of this sort is shown by a case in which the people in Bedford-Stuyvesant went to the big Manhattan banks and got an easing of mortgage rates to the point that it was feasible to do home improvements—a crying need in this run-down section. But there is no communication system within the Bedford-Stuyvesant area that would get word to interested residents. If they had their own communication system delivered by cable or short-range microwave, it would be possible not only to furnish an information service but also an entertainment service geared exclusively to their own interests, frequently using local talent plus delivering all twelve additional channels.

The twenty-five-channel system is available right now. You could get burglary warning service, or fire warning service, and meter reading and all the rest along with it. This is the type of diversity of service which is practical and can develop in areas even much smaller than Bedford-Stuyvesant. This is not going to meet all requirements vis-à-vis coverage of international news, but it might with respect to national news, because it might be possible even for a little storefront operation in Bedford-Stuyvesant to buy a UPI wire and picture service, for example, and use its own reporters or correspondent writers to select news with a specific application in this area.

Cox: In summary, then, the main decision that has emerged here is that we do need urgently in television much more research. It is astonishing how very little is known in any scientific way about what in fact this medium is doing to the people who watch it. We assume that it is powerful. But one of the points of information that greatly interests me is that although there is a great deal of evidence to prove that people regard it as the most powerful and the most trustworthy medium for politics, some very chastening statistics prove that a very small proportion of what we put out is retained in the minds of viewers.

Another point that I find particularly interesting as a former writing journalist is the quite valuable volume of research indicating that it is what people hear rather than what they see on the screen that sticks in their minds. We cannot think that it is enough to put the picture on. What matters enormously also are the words that go with the picture.

HALLORAN: I think it is worth mentioning that the International Broadcast Institute is willing not to just talk about cooperation between researchers and producers, but is willing to back research which will in fact look at the whole communications process. At the University of Leicester, we are about to start a comparative study of newsmaking, news selection, and news presentation, in three different countries. We have yet to select the countries. We shall also do a content analysis of news and an audience study relevant to both the production and the content sides. Four companies—one in Africa and three in Europe—have already offered us full facilities.

OLOF RYDBECK (Director General, Swedish Broadcasting Corporation): My organization is among those to open their doors for certain studies. My feeling is that unless we obtain information through sources which could not in any way be suspect in purpose—to suppress or to give license to journalists on television—there may be a great problem.

Everybody has an idea about the impact of TV. When you have established there is an impact, or people believe there is an impact, immediately they start looking for the causes in a certain attitude taken by the news editors. Unless the whole process of newsgathering and news selection is subjected to some sort of impartial study I think we are in for more and more trouble, and the trouble will not be that there is an inconvenience; it will be that we have to defend ourselves; that forces in society on an uninformed basis assume certain things and impose codes which are entirely opposed to the maximum freedom of information that should be our aim.

#### Matter of interpretation

New York Times (top)  
and Milwaukee Journal,  
June 18, 1970.

*Dr. Salk and Francoise Gilot,  
Picasso's Ex-Mistress, to Wed*

*Salk to Wed Picasso's Friend*

## The trouble with science writing

If technology is to be brought under control, science reporters must move beyond mere description to evaluation that raises the "hard questions."

JOHN LEAR

■ The member of the U. S. Congress who understands science best is Emilio Q. Daddario, the Connecticut Democrat who chairs the Subcommittee on Science, Research, and Development of the House Committee on Science and Astronautics. In the preamble of a bill he recently introduced, he declared: "Emergent national problems, physical and social, are of such a nature and are developing at such an unprecedented rate as to constitute a major threat to the security and general welfare of the United States." These problems, he continued, "are largely the result of and are allied to" the rising pressure of expanding population, the rapid consumption of natural resources, and the erosion of the natural and social environment of the human species. "Widespread application of modern technology, existing and evolving," is "crucial."

This is a diplomatic but firm way of saying that technology has got out of hand and that society needs science's help to bring it back under control. Less polite echoes of Daddario's views are everywhere reverberating in choruses calling for respect for the environment. Unfortunately, the echoes diverge—as echoes will when they enter

side streets from the great public squares—and some of the clamor against pollution of the environment ends as a shout against science.

Those of us who are engaged in trying to communicate truth to the mass of the people have, I think, an obligation to clarify the blurs in popular concepts of the antipollution issue. We might profitably begin by taking the philosophy of Daddario's bill as a model for our thinking. That measure at no point blames science alone for a predicament that scientists and nonscientists together are to blame for; on the contrary, it calls upon science to apply presently available knowledge and to acquire new knowledge to bring the use of technology into human perspective.

Science is open to misunderstanding because of serious failings in science reporting. The present situation never would have come about if science reporters had presented developments in their true perspective as the events occurred. That is my view. Admittedly, not all science writers would agree with this position. Some regard the science writer's task as essentially descriptive. Just as there is an opinion that "pure" scientists should pursue lines of experimentation without regard to consequences, so some science writers define their function as one of merely relating what scientists plan, undertake, complete, and pronounce. Interpretation of social consequences has no place in this definition.

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John Lear is science editor of *Saturday Review*. His work has won the Lasker Award, the Westinghouse Award of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and two Sigma Delta Chi Awards.



This may at one time have been an adequate concept—though I doubt it. To understand my reservations, it is necessary only to consider the reason the press enjoys the protection of the First Amendment. That protection is given in return for maintaining eternal vigilance in all public affairs. Science and technology and their effects now are central influences on public affairs. As such they must be the subject of aggressive, informed journalistic attention.

Given this dyad of privilege and obligation, we may fairly ask why the press waited so long to focus on such developments as man's alienation from his environment. I believe my own experience with the problem is instructive. It goes back fourteen years, to the time when Norman Cousins encouraged me to establish the monthly Science and Humanity Section of *Saturday Review*.

For a long time, newspapers had been undergoing mergers and chain linkages that had weakened local news interest and left publishers more concerned with providing entertainment than with obtaining information for their readers. There had been a consequent decline in old-fashioned inquiring reportage, and this reached its nadir at the very moment when science was beginning to emerge as a social force. The course of least resistance in covering science was to accept without question what the scientists said. But neither Cousins nor I were able to accept this restricted concept of science reporting. He was already known for his concern with nuclear fallout as an atmospheric pollutant. The mandate he gave me was much broader: the whole gamut of science's impact on society.

The first tenet of my philosophy was that man is an evolving creature in an evolving environment. Far from believing—as most scientific spokesmen then did—that man could conquer nature, I believed that the best he could hope for was a state of harmony between himself and all the other forms of life around him and the inanimate forces around them. In the second issue of the supplement, dated April 21, 1956, I wrote: "Incessantly [man] has tinkered, changed, invented, adapted, altered his own behavior in order to live happily among his fellowmen." Man had done all this but of late he had forgotten

why, and I proclaimed our purpose: "to reestablish the common man's belief in the oneness of things."

To write about science vis-à-vis society was to me equivalent to writing about man vis-à-vis his environment. For science has always been society's agent in dealing with the environment. However, the approach evoked considerable hostile reaction. Broad-gauged scientific figures like Detlev Bronk, Caryl P. Haskins, James R. Killian, Jr., Roger Revelle, and others gave us unfailing support. But to the ordinary run of scientists what we were saying was balderdash.

When E. B. White of the *New Yorker* entered the arena in 1959, he escaped the antagonism of the scientists by coming directly to the point. In the May 16, 1959, issue of his magazine, he wrote: "Because the . . . contamination of air, sea, and soil proceeds apace, the *New Yorker* will undertake to assemble bulletins tracing man's progress in making the planet uninhabitable. This is Bulletin No. 1." For a year he wrote Bulletins No. 2, 3, 4, etc. Then he received a letter from the late marine biologist Rachel Carson urging him to write a long report on environmental pollution. Being among the readers of Miss Carson's classic book, *The Sea Around Us*, White suggested that Miss Carson do the article herself. She did, and it appeared in three issues of the *New Yorker* in 1962 under the heading, "Silent Spring." One of her paragraphs read:

The history of life on earth is a history of the interaction of living things and their surroundings. To an overwhelming extent, the physical form and the habits of the earth's vegetation and its animal life have been molded and directed by the environment. Over the whole span of earthly time, the opposite effect, in which life modifies its surroundings, has been relatively slight. It is only within the moment of time represented by the twentieth century that one species—man—has acquired significant power to alter the nature of his world, and it is only within the past twenty-five years that this power has achieved such magnitude that it endangers the whole earth and its life. The most alarming of all man's assaults upon the environment is the contamination of the air, earth, rivers, and seas with dangerous, and even lethal, materials.

Miss Carson was attacked as an alarmist and defended as a righteous crusader. But because she

was a scientist the word war generated by "Silent Spring's" appearance as a book did not take a lay vs. scientific alignment. Scientists arrayed themselves against scientists and laymen (mostly conservationists) against laymen (mostly industrialists engaged in manufacture or distribution of insecticides). Only recently did society as a whole decide Miss Carson was right.

The decision's effect on journalism has been profound. *Time* has included within its news columns a department on the environment. The New York *Times* has put a nationally reputed reporter, Gladwin Hill, on an exclusive environmental beat. The *Christian Science Monitor* gave Robert Cahn—now one of three members of the White House Council on Environmental Quality—a similar assignment after his series on the national parks that won a Pulitzer Prize in 1969. And *Saturday Review* recently expanded its Science and Humanity Supplement and renamed it Environment and the Quality of Life.

Why did it take a scientist to bring the problem into focus? Why didn't a science writer do the job?

What we were suffering from was a plain case of journalistic amnesia. In dealing with science, reporters and editors alike forgot what they as journalists were supposed to be doing. Instead of treating scientists as they treat all other people—expecting them to be individual blends of good and bad (sometimes generous and sometimes greedy, sometimes right and sometimes wrong, sometimes competent and sometimes incompetent) and challenging them at every turn not clearly in the public interest—science writers generally acted as apologists for science. Editors, on their part, accepted the scientific cliché that specialization was the great desideratum, forgetting that society is a whole organism and has to be kept alive and well by general practitioners.

Take the case of the thoughtless race to the moon. It is politically expedient to hold the late President John F. Kennedy responsible for this strategic gamble. He urged it as a national goal in a message to Congress. In that same message, however, he expressed the hope that a national debate over the goal's desirability and feasibility would ensue. A few statesmen of science, includ-

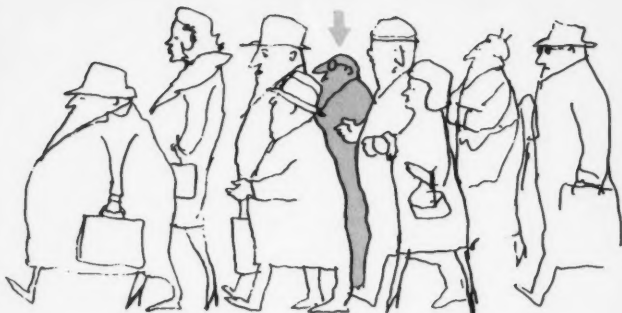
ing biologist Philip Abelson, editor of *Science*, the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, did raise dissenting voices. But science writers generally sat on the knowledge that the vast majority of the scientific community was either lukewarm to the idea or hostile to it. The lay public, reading virtually no opposition in the news columns, presumed that the men who knew most about the subject—the scientists—were for it.

My own position is that the 1970 moon landing deadline was a mistake. But I believe that the space beyond Earth should be explored, in a consistent and reasonable manner in keeping with other more urgent goals of the American people. I believe, too, that the people should have a direct voice in the decision. To help provide them such an opportunity, *Saturday Review* in 1957 conducted the only genuine scientific study any magazine has ever made of public attitudes toward human travel in space beyond planet Earth. Our questionnaires were used as lesson texts in schools all over the globe, and huge cartons of returns were shipped to our office from as far away as Africa, India, and Australia. When we published a brief summary of our results, the Voice of America produced a special broadcast about it.

We had hoped to repeat the questionnaire periodically, thus acquiring benchmarks of public understanding of the realities of space travel while educating the public about those realities. Had this been done the extreme dangers inherent in human voyaging in space might have sunk into popular consciousness long before the near-tragedy of Apollo 13, and the destructive effect of sudden swings in employment and unemployment of space technicians would have been pondered before being provoked. But the euphoric atmosphere generated by the science-writer-apologists for the great space adventure proved too strong: computer-makers, whose help was required to handle our data, declined to support our efforts, and the study died on the vine. Our original findings are stored in a national public opinion archive somewhere.

Another vividly remembered example of science writers' failure to exercise the critical faculty occurred in coverage of abuses in drug advertising.

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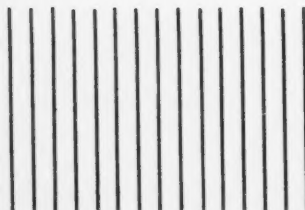
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Late in 1958, a woman reader wrote to ask if I would undertake a census of antibiotics, indicating which ones were effective against what infections and which were not effective at all. I told her I thought she should obtain the answer from her physician. She replied that her physician had suggested that she write me. My curiosity aroused, I consulted academic drug research specialists, who encouraged me to expose a string of antibiotic sales promotion journals that were being edited by Henry Welch, head of the antibiotics division of the U. S. Food and Drug Administration.

I pursued Welch for months, documenting his perfidies and publishing the evidence. Other science writers showed no interest until the late

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## "Science writers acted as apologists for science..."

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Senator Estes Kefauver used my material to force Welch's resignation from the FDA. After that, the *New Yorker* related the whole story to its readers, the *New York Times* published an editorial commending SR's efforts, and our magazine received Sigma Delta Chi's annual award for distinguished public service. I was gratified by the acknowledgments, but I feel that if other science writers had shown an earlier interest in Welch he would have been put in jail, where he belonged. More importantly, the drug advertisers who bought his services while the American people were paying him to protect them would have been punished.

A third instance of journalistic apathy about science involved the helpless old patients in a Brooklyn hospital who were being inoculated with live cancer cells without their knowledge or consent. Dr. Chester Southam of Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research was placed on probation for a year by New York's medical licensing authorities for his leading role in that experiment. Our magazine was the only one to print all the miserable details of the episode, although

*Science* must be given credit for refusing to sit on the lid that the press as a whole imposed.

Thanks to the courage of editor Abelson and the energy and skill of muckraker Daniel Greenberg, *Science* has, in fact, become a model for candid reporting of science news. In its columns, Philip Boffey recently went so far as to suggest that even the prestigious National Academy of Sciences is not free of adulterative influence. According to Boffey's report—which has not been denied—an Academy study panel toned down its original findings to please the government agency that requested and paid for the study.

I say more power to Boffey. After all, reporters who cover the goings-on in government or in corporate boardrooms are expected to keep their eyes peeled for chicanery every day of the week. Why should scientists escape comparable scrutiny? What they do affects every facet of our lives. As taxpayers we foot the bill for their work, for it is done principally on federal government grants and contracts. The harder they resist detailed accounting of their expenditures of public funds, the more closely they should be watched. As Edmund Burke, the great British jurist, said: "Where secrecy begins, justice ends."

We have learned from books like James Watson's *Double Helix* that the white laboratory coat does not guarantee against its wearer's taking whatever advantage he considers justified by the needs of the moment. We have seen otherwise great and dedicated surgeons—Denton Cooley and Michael de Bakey, for example—squabbling like children over authority in a hospital.

I am not alone in the beliefs I am asserting. Nor do those who agree with me exist only within the ranks of journalism. Alvin M. Weinberg, director of the Atomic Energy Commission's Oak Ridge Laboratory, has publicly pleaded with his scientific colleagues to accept—no, to welcome—intrusion of Lincoln Steffens' muckraking tradition into science reporting. He has even proposed that scientists themselves become reporters of what is happening within their own bailiwicks, his grounds being that no outsider can tell the story with the verity of an insider. Perhaps Weinberg is right. I am inclined to feel that the insider has a harder time achieving a total perspective

than the outsider does. In either case if both insiders and outsiders were to approach the same matters as honestly as they know how, the total effect would be more revealing than anything we have seen in print on science up to now.

A subsidiary problem must be recognized. Effective use of the English language is not a part of the American scientist's education. Before he could speak to the whole people and be understood, a scientist-reporter would have to acquire respect for the mother tongue comparable to the regard a Russian scientist has for Russian or a British scientist has for the British dialects of English. Too often, the American scientist looks upon facility with common English as a cloak for opportunism, charlatanism, or worse.

Failure to express themselves clearly does not inhibit scientists from trying to thwart readable interpretations by outsiders. I clearly remember the cries of pain and rage that rose in the scientific community after the early issues of *Saturday Review's* Science and Humanity supplement. That any layman would dare to write about scientists and their experiments without submitting his copy to them for editing (no one would admit it was censorship) in advance of publication! When I assumed the right to say that the National Science Foundation had an obligation to assert itself in establishing priorities for research in America, a functionary of that agency tried to have the issue with my comment taken off the press.

I cannot recall how long it has been since a scientist tried to bludgeon me into submitting my copy to him. The gambit now is more wary, taking some such form as "I'll be happy to help you check your story before you print it." I gather from the persistence of such approaches that at least some other science writers are dutifully submitting copy and accepting whatever revisions are handed out. From press releases, I also get the impression that science writers generally do not check up very carefully on claims of "new" or "exclusive" discoveries. University press offices are at least as bad as, if not worse than, industrial laboratories in advancing unjustified claims.

Science writing is improving. The bulk of it now seems to be done by men and women who are both more sophisticated and more independent in

their thinking than were their counterparts of twenty or even ten years ago. But most of them are still not courageous enough in facing the big public questions, such as weighing the moon voyages against other possible expenditures of public money or in exposing the danger that exists for highway accident victims if the new definitions of death sought by organ transplant specialists are commonly accepted. Again, perhaps this is because it has not become second nature to try to relate everything in science to man and his society.

It is in the area of over-all evaluation that the science journalist has his greatest opportunity for public service. There is a vital need for evaluation of social processes in which science and technology are involved. Lacking the evaluative function, society will simply go on repeating the same old tired mistakes, discarding unsuccessful political programs and instituting new ones without making use of any yardsticks of performance.

How can this evaluative function be instituted and enlarged?

First, of course, the science reporter must be moved away from the "purist," restricted, merely descriptive approach. There is no better model to follow than the late J. Robert Oppenheimer. Years ago he led a movement to broaden the scientist's concept of the scientist's role. The interdisciplinary approach to research and teaching that he pressed for is now well established on many campuses. Journalists must embrace this approach to science writing, too.

The spirit of untrammelled inquiry and skepticism required of journalists in other fields must become standard in science writing. But this won't happen unless editors insist upon it. If a science reporter turns in copy replete with unanswered or half-answered questions, he must be sent back to get the rest of the facts and he must be required to say what those facts mean in terms of the ordinary reader. If science writers do not ask basic questions, editors must, both in making assignments and in handling copy. I am weary of hearing it said that all the weaknesses of science reporting will disappear when there are enough science reporters to fill the field. No larger number of reporters is going to do the job if we do not apply the critical faculty.

Of some 310 stations that program for blacks, all but sixteen are white-owned. Most are "soul-radio" wastelands devoid of news and public affairs.

## The white captivity of black radio

FRED FERRETTI

■ Among the dozens of changes of ownership in broadcast franchises last year were three involving William F. Buckley, Jr., columnist, TV host, and publisher of the *National Review*. With the Starr brothers of Omaha, Neb., he bought control of black-oriented radio stations WBOK New Orleans, WLOK Memphis, and KYOK Houston. Except for Buckley's notoriety, however, there was little unusual about the transactions. Of some 310 stations listed by the 1969 *Broadcasting Yearbook* as programming at least in part for blacks, all but sixteen were owned by whites—and no TV franchises in this country were owned by blacks. Nor was Buckley's three-station investment likely to be as unprofitable as *National Review* (which, like most magazines of comment and opinion, never is far from financial shoals): annual advertising billings on black-oriented radio stations are estimated at \$35 million, and most earn profits ranging from comfortable to spectacular.

Unfortunately, most, too, are shameful caricatures of the public-service image suggested by requirements for a license to use public airwaves. A black disc jockey—paid far less than white counterparts on larger stations, and with less chance of advancement—may play an Aretha Franklin record, then in "down home" accents assert that the record undoubtedly "made your

liver quiver and your knees freeze." Then he will segue into a frantic plug for a "Top Forty" rock number before playing the record—deafeningly. On the hour, news will consist of a piece of wire copy ripped from a teletype and read verbatim by the same disc jockey. Required public service time will be filled mainly by pseudo-evangelist hours. And commercial sponsors will be sought willy-nilly, without sifting the "dollar-down, dollar-a-week forever" entrepreneurs from the nondeceptive advertisers.

Not all black-oriented radio stations conform to this description, of course. Station WLIB in Harlem has won two Peabody Awards, most recently in April for a program called *Higher Horizons*, which attempts to provide students from disadvantaged backgrounds with information on how to enter colleges and how to finance their education. Other black-oriented stations also provide some noteworthy public service programs. Under pressure from citizen groups which have mounted challenges to broadcast franchises, more such programming improvements seem in the offing. But, on the whole, broadcasting stations oriented toward America's black citizenry remind one of nothing so much as Newton Minow's historic description of American commercial television—"a vast wasteland."

This is not merely because, as noted in a Race Relations Information Center study by Bernard E. Garnett earlier this year, "by and large 'soul'

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Fred Ferretti covers radio-TV for the New York Times.

radio still is a black-oriented version of 'Top Forty' (also known as 'bubble gum') radio, which appeals mainly to white adolescents." (Most white-oriented radio, after all, is little more imaginative than that.) There are, as Garnett points out, these related factors:

Nearly a quarter-century after a radio station first geared its entire broadcasting format to black interests, there still is no nationwide black-oriented news network. Blacks still comprise the vast minority in key executive positions at "soul" stations. Entertainment programming is based almost entirely on "Rhythm-n-Blues" or "rock" music, with little or no emphasis on black performances in jazz, "pop," folk, or other music modes.

Such circumstances never arose in the black press. For the black press, for all its problems, always has been owned largely by blacks. Because its main commodity was news and features, it had to provide at least minimal reporting and comment on community concerns; develop black management talent; and not only respond somewhat to the black community but at times provide critical leadership. Moreover, any black individual or organization could establish a newspaper or magazine if he could raise the money and find an audience, and publishers ranging from "establishment" commercial entrepreneurs to the Black Muslims and Black Panthers have done so [see "The Black Press in Transition," Spring, 1970].

Broadcasting, however, requires not only capital but a license. Licenses are available only from the Federal Communications Commission. The FCC always has had an all-white membership and until recently almost never seriously questioned a license transfer or renewal application. Hence licenses for stations "serving" the black community could be transferred from white seller to white buyer with few questions asked, either about the relevance of programming to the black community or about the possible availability of a black owner.

Perhaps inevitably, then, in searching the list of some 7,350 commercial stations in *Broadcasting Yearbook*, one is extremely hard-pressed to find black-owned or black-managed stations. The Nashville-based Race Relations Information Cen-

ter, in Garnett's report "How Soulful Is 'Soul' Radio?" lists only nine black-owned stations:

—KPRS, KANSAS CITY, Mo., owned by Andrew Carter. Kansas City is 26 per cent black; KPRS ranks fifth in general audience ratings.

—WCHB AND WCHD-FM, DETROIT, owned by the Bell Broadcasting Company; president, Dr. Haley Bell, a black dentist. His two sons-in-law, Dr. Wendell Cox and Dr. Robert Bass, also dentists, are co-owners. Detroit's population is about 45 per cent black. WCHB is the first-ranked black outlet, and eighth-ranked generally.

—KWK, ST. LOUIS. Bell Broadcasting Company and Vickway Broadcasting Company, also black-dominated, both claim control; the courts and the FCC will eventually rule.

—WEBB, BALTIMORE; WJBE, KNOXVILLE, TENN.; and WRDW, AUGUSTA, GA., all owned by singer James Brown, thus making James Brown Broadcasting, Ltd., of New York, the country's only black-owned and operated radio chain. WJBE, bankrupt when Brown took it over, now ranks fourth in Knoxville, whose population is about 21 per cent black. WRDW is the top-rated black station in Augusta, which is about 50 per cent black, and second-ranked generally. No ranking is available on WEBB. Baltimore is about 25 per cent black.

—WHOV-FM, HAMPTON, VA., owned by the Hampton Institute Mass Media Arts Department.

—WSHA-FM, RALEIGH, N. C., owned by the Shaw University School of Communications.

The Center report notes that Atlanta's WERD, which for many years was the nation's only black-owned station, was bought by a white group in 1968. It remains black-programmed in Atlanta, a city 38 per cent black.

This roster of nine black-owned stations is augmented by seven others either entirely or partially black-owned, listed by *Advertising Age* last February 9. These are:

WGPR, DETROIT, whose chief owner is Dr. William V. Banks, a gynecologist. The outlet is ranked third in Detroit's black market and twelfth generally.



WMPP, CHICAGO HEIGHTS, ILL., owned by Charles J. Pinckard, a restaurant owner. It ranks fourth among Chicago's black-oriented stations.

WEUP, HUNTSVILLE, ALA., owned by Leroy Garrett. It is the only black station in a city which is 9 per cent black.

WTLC-FM, INDIANAPOLIS, IND., held since 1968 by Frank Lloyd. The station ranks first in the black market, third generally in a city which is 28 per cent black.

WORV, HATTIESBURG, MISS., owned by Vernon Floyd, just began broadcasting last Summer.

WWWS-FM, SAGINAW, MICH., even newer than WORV, is owned by Earl Clark, an engineer.

WVOE, CHADBOURN, N. C., is owned by Ebony Enterprises, principal owner Ralph Vaught, Jr. Chadbourn's population is about 20 per cent black.

The list is woefully meager. More distressing are the results of the Race Relations Information Center's survey of five white-owned-and-operated "soul" radio chains. The five are:

—ROLLINS, INC., BROADCASTING DIVISION, of Atlanta, which has four stations: WBEE, Chicago; WGEE, Indianapolis; WNJR, Newark; and WRAP, Norfolk, Va.

—ROUNSAVILLE RADIO STATIONS, Atlanta, with four stations: WCIN, Cincinnati; WLOU, Louisville, Ky.; WVOL, Nashville; and WYLD, New Orleans.

—SONDERLING BROADCASTING CORPORATION, of New York City, which has four stations: KDIA, Oakland; WDIA, Memphis; WOL, Washington, D. C.; and WWRL, Woodside, N. Y.

—SPEIDEL BROADCASTERS, INC., Columbia, S. C., which has six stations: WHIH, Portsmouth, Va.; WOIC, Columbia; WPAL, Charleston, S. C.; WSOK, Savannah; WTMP, Tampa; and WYNN, Florence, S. C.

—UNITED BROADCASTING COMPANY of Washington, D. C., with four stations: WJMO, Cleveland; WFAN-TV, Washington; WOOK, Washington; and WSID, Baltimore. United began an all-black-programming TV experiment on WOOK-TV in Washington. The station, with youth dance parties, filmed gospel services, old movies, and talk

shows, failed to attract viewers; its call letters then were changed to WFAN-TV, and the black-oriented programming was cut to about 60 per cent.

The RRIC survey of these five combines turned up these facts: in the twenty-two stations which make up the chains, there are eighty-four executive positions in station management and twenty-two news positions. Of these, blacks hold thirty executive positions and fourteen news jobs. But, the survey reported, many of these "executive" positions exist in name only. For example, on Speidel's WSOK, Charles Anthony, who does a disc jockey show, is listed as program director,

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### *"The FCC always has had a white membership..."*

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news director, and public affairs director. He told the surveyors, "I wish I had the money to go with all my titles and responsibilities." WSOK also, it appears, has a sense of humor: along with its tapes sponsored by the NAACP and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, it lists as public affairs broadcasts for its black audience fifteen-minute talks by Governor Lester Maddox and Senator Herman Talmadge. At Speidel's WYNN, Jack Singleton is listed as program director and news director, and United's WJMO has John Slade listed as station manager and news director.

Two years ago there reportedly was only one black station manager in radio, and there were so few black executives that a *Newsweek* study was prompted to observe that "on many stations only the disc jockeys and janitors are black." Generally speaking the news staffs on these stations are inadequate. In most instances they consist of one man. Often news "staffs" are parttime employees; news directors are disc jockeys who read wire copy. Public service activities generally seem to be of the support-your-community-fund

variety; much of the on-the-air public service comes in packages from civil rights organizations.

Much of the news on black-oriented stations comes from the Mutual Broadcasting System, the American Contemporary Network (a division of American Broadcasting Company), United Press International Audio, or Metromedia News. But shows are pretaped and certainly not geared to local interests. There are, however, two organizations in New York—American Black Communications, Inc., and the Black Audio Network—that provide news and black-oriented features.

Barrie Beere, who runs American Black Communications, says that he has gotten the greatest response from a *Focus on Black* series of tapes done by Jackie Robinson, Ruby Dee, Ossie Davis, James Earl Jones, and Brock Peters. He has even sold these syndications to other than black-appeal stations, but says "by and large it has been our experience that the stations do not buy our service unless they can find themselves a sponsor to carry it." Jay Levy's Black Audio Network twice daily sends from New York phone feeds of several items, each 30 to 40 seconds long, designed to fit into standard news broadcast formats. The service, less than a year old, last Fall absorbed the Soul News Network after its founder and sole operator, Chris Cutter, had been unable to obtain regular sponsors or long-term station contracts.

There have been several other attempts at black-oriented networking. In the early 1950s Leonard Evans, founder of the black-oriented supplement *Tuesday*, launched the National Negro Network and built its client list to fifty stations—all but two owned by whites. But NNN was discontinued when white station owners began demanding, in Evans' words, "an unreasonably large share" of profits. After the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., black disc jockey Rudy Runnels at WIGO, Atlanta, was so deluged with phone calls asking for spot "feeds" that he organized a temporary national pool of reporters, including staff members of rival WAOK, Atlanta. Known as the American Freedom Network, the service provided coverage for some 200 stations. And two years ago, the American Broadcasting Company was known to have been contemplating an exclusive service for black-oriented stations,

but it dropped the idea when, according to an ABC source, white-owned stations proved unwilling to yield profitable local commercial time for regular network feeds.

A few weeks ago in San Diego, Chuck Johnson, former general manager of XEGM, Tijuana, announced formation of a Black Video Syndication Network to service both radio and TV stations. TV programming is to include *Black '70* (patterned on NBC-TV's *Today*); a children's quiz program with ex-boxer Archie Moore as host; and several variety shows. At this writing radio network plans remain to be announced.

Efforts to create a news network for blacks are complicated by attitudes of many white owners of black stations. They claim that audiences want

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### *"News directors are disc jockeys with wire copy..."*

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rhythm and blues and "soul," and all the rest is incidental. Alan Henry, vice president for operations of the Sonderling chain, insists, "As broadcasters, we don't dictate taste; our listeners do. 'Soul' music is what our listeners have shown they prefer, by and large, to other types. The reformists can like what they want, but the listeners dictate the programming." But Dr. S. F. Mack, associate communications director of the United Church of Christ, thinks differently. "The stations have fostered an atmosphere in which only the 'soul' format is successful. Consequently, too many blacks have gotten used to it, the way dope addicts get used to drugs."

Other authorities agree. William Wright, director of Unity House in Washington, D. C., and a force behind the Black United Front which is challenging the license of WMAL-TV, asks: "Do we need twenty-four hours of James Brown?" He answers: "No, we don't. If we're going to talk about freedom and self-determination, we need to hear

our black heroes performing in other art forms. We need to talk about drug addiction, about slum landlords, about jobs, about education. But the white man gives us twenty-four hours of 'soul' because it pads his already stuffed pockets and keeps black people ignorant."

Citizen action already has been organized against several black-oriented stations. A coalition of citizen groups, for example, has complained to the FCC that Speidel's WOIC filed inaccurate data in its 1969 license application. The complaint contends that blacks received titles without pay or commensurate duties (News Director Paris Eley was alleged to be a disc jockey; Program Director Charles Derrick was said not to have the powers of that office). The station has denied the charges, and the FCC has scheduled a hearing. United's WOOK in Washington has been accused by a citizens' group of broadcasting religious programs that offered illegal lottery numbers in the guise of scriptural references; an FCC hearing is scheduled. Rounsaville's WVOL has had a labor dispute pending in the courts since 1968. And *Variety* reported early this year on a four-city advertising boycott of United Broadcasting's properties by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, plus a petition to the FCC opposing renewal of WJMO in Cleveland. The SCLC claims that policymaking blacks are virtually nonexistent at the station.

The most dramatic result thus far has been in Atlanta. There twenty black organizations, led by the local NAACP, have formed a coalition which won major concessions from twenty-two of twenty-eight stations—both black-oriented and general-audience. Included are agreements to hire and train more blacks, earmark executive positions for blacks, step up public service activities, and consult regularly on programming.

In the end, of course, the future of meaningful "soul" radio and of black-owned-and-operated stations will be only as bright or as swift to come as the increases in the number of blacks who can buy and know how to run radio stations. A singular worry at the moment is the "Pastore Bill," S.2004, introduced by Senator John Pastore. This, if passed—and it has not only a good deal of Congressional approval but also the hearty en-

dorsement of the National Association of Broadcasters—would require the FCC to renew a currently held license without consideration of rival applications if the Commission found that the licensee had served and presumably would continue to serve the public interest. Rival applicants would be considered only if the FCC decided against renewal. The Pastore Bill was followed by an FCC ruling under which license challengers would not be heard if current licensees substantially met the public interest.

With some justification, William R. Hudgins, president of Harlem's Freedom National Bank (the country's largest black bank), and other "soul" radio reformers fear that the Pastore Bill and/or

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*"The white man  
profits by keeping  
blacks ignorant..."*

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the FCC ruling in effect would grant licenses in perpetuity, shutting off challenges—particularly black challenges—and thus barring black ownership of stations. Others believe that pressure on broadcasters—soul and otherwise—nonetheless will continue to mount, forcing either improvements or license denials. Those in this camp regard strides made in the Sixties as direct result of challenges, of monitoring, and of pressure.

One such believer is Del Shields, outspoken WLIB disc jockey in New York and the former executive director of the National Association of Television and Radio Announcers, whose members are primarily black disc jockeys. Says Shields: "No amount of legislation will make black people continue to accept the junk that's being offered them now. The Pastore Bill will be a severe cramp, but it will not be the end. As the pressure increases all over the country, white broadcasters either will have to improve their products, sell out to black interests, or be forced out."

## Books

# Did the 'Post' have to die?

There was more to the great magazine's last days than meets the reader of three recent books. Might better editing have saved it? An essay review.

ROBERT SHERROD

DECLINE AND FALL. By Otto Friedrich. Harper & Row. \$10.  
THE CURTIS-CULLIGAN STORY. By Matthew J. Culligan.  
Crown. \$5.95.

THE CURTIS AFFAIR. By Martin S. Ackerman. Nash. \$5.95.

■ This, the 1970 crop of books about the Curtis Publishing Company debacle, consists of the third, fourth, and fifth volumes on that subject, having been preceded by a minor effort in 1965 called *The Curtis Caper*, by Joseph C. Goulden, and the 1969 novel *The Board Room*, by Clay Blair, Jr., one of the principal figures in the disintegration of Curtis.

Both Culligan and Ackerman were presidents of Curtis, though they never met. Culligan's story covers the period from July, 1962—when he, a supersalesman, was summoned from Madison Avenue to Philadelphia to sell lots of advertising and save the company—until January, 1965, when the board of directors stripped him of his last title and settled his contract. Ackerman, the thirty-six-year-old president of the Perfect Film and Chemical Company, rushed in with \$5 million in April, 1968, to save the *Saturday Evening Post*. He kept

it alive for twenty more issues (forty weeks) until he killed it at the February 8, 1969, issue.

(Between Culligan and Ackerman the dominant Curtis executive was John McLean Clifford, who became president in late 1964 when none of the other candidates would take the job, and lasted until he faded away with the advent of Ackerman in 1968. Clifford has given no indication that he intends to write a book, but one of his chief lieutenants, G. B. McCombs, who miraculously survived thirty-nine years at Curtis, informs me that he has had an offer from a publisher, "and quite a substantial one, at that"—though he doesn't think he will write.)

Catapulting a businessman into the public eye provides him with a personal experience that he never forgets. One day he is Marty Ackerman, a successful young offspring of a middle-class Jewish family from Rochester—rich, smart, and comfortable. The next, he is front-page news and his name is spread throughout the land by *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, Ackerman writes:

Whether the press was greeting my moves and announcements with kudos or carping, there was at least this consolation: the adjectives used to describe my personality and style were invariably forceful. . . . The image pleased me, not out of vanity, but because decisiveness was precisely what had been too long lacking at the Curtis Publishing Company.

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Robert Sherrod, formerly vice president and editorial coordinator of Curtis Publishing Company, now is writing a history of the Apollo space program, to be published by Macmillan.



To Otto Friedrich, Ackerman said the *Post* could achieve an aura of success only "by being attached to my own personal success, see? When they write stories about me, those stories will help the *Post*."

"Joe Culligan used to have a similar theory," said Friedrich wickedly. Indeed, Culligan's theories about publicity were similar. Wearing an eyepatch to cover the wound he received in the Battle of the Bulge, Culligan cut a spectacular swath during his first year and a half at Curtis, when he managed to chop the company's losses from \$19 million to \$3.5 million. The *Gallagher Report*, a Madison Avenue gossip sheet, selected him as "The Man Who Did the Most for the Advertising Industry in 1962," and the *New York Times* named him as "one of the men who left a strong imprint on U.S. business in 1963." When Culligan finally fell, he blamed much of his trouble on the *New York Times* and *Time*, and he considered suing *Time* for saying, "The Culligan-Blair regime was a textbook example of mismanagement." But a libel lawyer talked him out of it. Not long before Blair led his revolution against Culligan, "he asked me to let him hire [his personal] public relations firm to handle him, and I agreed because it was good business." A gift for the man who has everything. Nonetheless, Blair "seemed to resent the favorable amount [of publicity] that a public relations man got for me," Culligan says.

These books by the Curtis presidents are, of course, an extension of their fascination with their personal images. Both of them tell their sides of the Curtis story, but they leave more questions than answers. Culligan, with a lustrum to rue his mistakes, indulges in frequent self-flagellation: "I should have gotten Clifford out of Curtis entirely instead of demoting him." "I should not have accepted Kantor's recommendation to fire Veronis and keep Blair." "Semenenko, I am sure, would have talked me out of hiring Kantor. I was to regret this decision more than any other I made in more than fifteen years in business." Etc.

Ackerman's thin book is hasty, amateurish, and devoid of regrets. He began his ten-month adventure naïvely supposing that his \$5 million and his "gift for making sick companies healthier" could rescue the Curtis monster that was devouring

\$20,000 a day, seven days a week, with no symptoms of a diminishing appetite. From his publicity, I had supposed that Ackerman bought control of Curtis to wreck it and claim salvage, but he projects an idealistic image in the beginning that stemmed in part from his having attended a school named for Ben Franklin. Marty learned, and he got all his money back as he rapidly dismantled Curtis, selling off the *Ladies' Home Journal* and *American Home*, buying the circulation company for his Perfect Film and Chemical Company (price \$12.5 million; potential annual profit \$5 million).

Of the five books written about Curtis' travails, Friedrich's is the most substantial. The whole story is not there, but there is probably more of it than will ever get into print again. It adds up to a revealing insight into the workings of a doomed periodical and a collapsing corporation. For the record, let me add some personal notes.

At one point Friedrich recounts his impressions of Philadelphia during the first week of September, 1962. (Friedrich has favorable and unfavorable comments about everyone, but if a box score were kept I would bat no more than .147 on the Friedrich scale—below anyone else except possibly "Mac" Clifford, "a sour little man," and William Emerson, who, despite Friedrich's protestations of loyalty, comes out loud-mouthed, crude, and bigoted). This is what Friedrich says about our last week in Philadelphia:

But Bob Sherrod's tasks during that week were beyond any rational comprehension. At the very least, he had to oversee the publication of a weekly magazine, plus the gathering together of a new staff, most of whom knew neither the magazine nor each other, plus the transfer of that whole staff and all its equipment . . . to New York.

Twice during my last four years with Curtis, the task fell to me of finding people to work for the ill-starred *Saturday Evening Post*. One doesn't simply say, "Come, let us go sailing on the beautiful *Titanic*." It takes some doing. The first time I had to find people I succeeded beyond any reasonable expectations; the other time I failed because I was jammed between the president of Curtis and the banker of Curtis.

The editorship of the *Post* was dumped into

my lap one afternoon in March, 1962, when Robert Fuoss, who had succeeded Ben Hibbs three months earlier, announced that he had had it. The Curtis Publishing Company incurred its first loss—a little more than \$4 million—in 1961 when its big money-maker, the *Post*, suffered a sharp drop in advertising. The Curtis forecast for 1962, when I took over the *Post*, was a horrendous \$11 million loss (it turned out to be \$19 million).

Obviously, something had to be done, and quickly. I approached the Curtis president, Robert MacNeal, and said we needed a lot of new editors; a high percentage of the editorial staff was approaching retirement age—six of the most important editors were over sixty—and others had fallen into the Independence Square rut. But, I told MacNeal, we weren't likely to find the people we needed in Philadelphia. Bright young men

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*"I said we  
needed a lot of  
new editors..."*

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don't come east from Des Moines or Seattle to seek fame and fortune in Philadelphia. Besides, the Philadelphia ambiance was not conducive to alert, top-of-the-trend journalism. Nor could we expect first-rate, thirty-two-year-old editors to dig their wives and children—all thirty-two-year-old editors in 1962 seemed to have four children—out of Westchester County or Long Island and come aboard our craft in crusty, inbred Philadelphia. (After seven years of residence as the *Post*'s managing editor, I myself had grown to like the place and I had recently remodeled, at painful expense, a house I had bought in Rittenhouse Square.)

The only solution seemed to be to violate all tradition and move the *Post* to New York. It would be expensive, not only to transport people, desks, typewriters, and photocopy machines, but also to pay off mortgages and make up losses accruing from the differentials. Living costs in New York would be higher, so I proposed a 20 per cent,

across-the-board salary increase for everyone except myself (having just been raised to \$75,000, I couldn't see giving me \$90,000 at this point). There was also the matter of severance pay for those who would not be making the trip to New York. MacNeal wearily agreed to all these Draconian measures. His own time was running out. Within a few weeks, while he was traveling in Europe, he was voted out of office by his Board of Directors.

On June 21 I told my secretary to pass the word that there would be a special staff meeting immediately. After I announced the decision I said I would like to interview each member of the staff individually. Before the day was out I had told seventeen of them that they would not be invited to New York in September—the most polite euphemism I could contrive for "you are fired." To several others, I said, "You are welcome to commute to New York until the first of the year, but I don't see how you can fit into the *Post*'s future." (I did not succumb to the temptation to add, "if any.")

I tried to be as humane as possible. Despite Curtis' heavy losses, MacNeal had approved my plan to give nearly everybody severance pay beyond the normal four weeks' salary. Some staff members received thirteen weeks' pay, and a few veterans got half a year's pay. Several were already eligible for pension, which was allowable at age fifty-five if the employee had fifteen years' service. Others were put on leave of absence until they could qualify for retirement. But it was an awful thing to have to perform such surgery on people with whom one had lived and worked so many years.

Some staff members, including foreign editor Martin Sommers, the *Post*'s Mr. Outside—he knew everybody—decided to remain in Philadelphia during their declining years, which in Marty's case amounted to hardly a twelvemonth. Two women of the staff stayed because Philadelphia was where their husbands were; another because of her lover. Only five of the thirty-odd secretaries elected to move to the Big City, the casualties including my beautiful and efficient Rosalie, who could not conceive of living anywhere but Philadelphia.

Here we were, committed every week to de-

liver 7 million copies of a magazine—we achieved the circulation during the summer—that, despite its adversity, still carried nearly a hundred million dollars' worth of advertising per year. To put that magazine on the newsstands and in the mailboxes we had ready, come September, just twenty editorial souls, plus five secretaries.

My managing editor, Clay Blair, suggested sending Don Schanche of the *Post's* Washington office to New York to prowl among the editorial rooms of other magazines. He knew his way around, so he soon learned who was discontented, fed up, or simply adventurous. The word spread rapidly: "The *Post* has a man in town offering jobs to everybody in sight"; the way to put a fellow employee under suspicion was to leave a note in his typewriter: DON SCHANCHE RETURNED YOUR CALL.

The beater flushed a lot of birds toward Phila-

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## "We flirted with Reuven Frank for about a month..."

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delphia. The first two appeared June 29: Don McKinney of *True*, whom I hired by simply paying him 30 per cent more than he was making, and a writer for *Sports Illustrated*, to whom I didn't offer a job. On July 3 William A. ("for Ap-pomattox") Emerson of *Newsweek* flew in to talk about a job as assistant managing editor in charge of articles; I hired him for \$32,500—the second highest price I offered. (Richard Gangel, art editor of *Sports Illustrated*, turned down \$45,000.)

One July Sunday I drove to New York and met Otto Alva Friedrich, aged thirty-three, an unhappy fellow, I had learned from Schanche, because he had been passed over as foreign editor of *Newsweek*. What I didn't know was the reason, but Friedrich tells us in his book: "You don't have enough panache," they had said at *Newsweek*. Friedrich naturally felt humiliated, and he began looking for other jobs about the time we were deciding to move to New York.

It is true there was no swagger to Friedrich and less plumage. He was a homely fellow in those days: gangling but with a little volleyball of a pot belly; teeth very bad, hair straw-colored and stiff as a board. But this son of a German-born Harvard professor, a magna cum laude graduate of his father's university at nineteen, was obviously a man of depth and intelligence. He had written two novels with titles that were not necessarily self-revealing—*The Loner* and *The Poor in Spirit*—plus a stack of children's books with his wife, including *The Easter Bunny that Overslept* and *Sir Alva and the Wicked Wizard*. Eight days later Otto and I met again, this time in Philadelphia, and we haggled a bit about his salary, arriving at \$23,000, which was what I had expected to pay him in the first place. He said he would come to Philadelphia on Mondays throughout August in order to learn the *modus operandi*, and he did.

To Friedrich and the others I hired—including John Hunt of Cowles Publications, Bill Ewald of *Show Business Illustrated*, Gerry Astor of *Sports Illustrated*, Jeanette Sarkisian of the *Chicago Daily News*, Trevor Armbrister, and Tom O'Toole—I made one thing clear: Curtis and the *Post* were in bad financial condition, as anyone could see in the newspapers. (I didn't say, as Joe Culligan did later, that when he arrived to replace MacNeal in July he figured Curtis was ninety days from bankruptcy.) With MacNeal's—later Culligan's—approval, I gave a letter contract for a year's salary to every man we hired away from another job. A couple of them got two-year contracts; I do not remember why but presumably they insisted on it. We also added a covey of first-rate free-lance writers to our contract list, including Robert Massie, Richard Armstrong, Ben Bagdikian, and a dozen others. The move to New York went off smoothly, and the staff were at their desks at 666 Fifth Avenue on the Monday morning following the final Friday in Philadelphia.

Friedrich writes:

And yet there was still more going on. . . . I did not know that Sherrod had already been marked for slaughter. Nor did I know that Clay Blair, once his protégé, would be his slaughterer.

Before the *Post* was well established in New York Blair's knife was deep in my ribs. I resigned

as editor of the *Post* (an action which Friedrich advances by two months in his account), and under a new contract I returned to writing articles from such remote spots as Auckland, Cairo, and Belgrade.

My second attempt at headhunting began two years later, after Blair and Marvin Kantor, chairman of the Curtis Magazine Division, led an editors' and publishers' revolt against Joe Culligan and succeeded in getting all three thrown out. My entry into this wild episode began with an appeal from Culligan to help hold the *Post* together because "the editors are going out on strike and trying to close down the magazine." Two of the *Post*'s outstanding correspondents, Stewart Alsop and Harold Martin, joined me in the effort. I ascertained that enough staff members would be at work on Monday morning to keep the magazine going—it was still a weekly in October, 1964—so we effectively broke the strike, for which Friedrich never forgave me.

Emerson was by now the managing editor, and Friedrich, the articles editor, was his deputy. After Culligan's removal from the presidency I stayed on to help "Mac" Clifford, his successor as chief executive officer, find an editor to replace Blair. In this project I was associated with A. Edward Miller, the former publisher of *McCall's* who had become a consultant to Curtis (at \$1,000 a day) after he had turned down the presidency of the company. A month after Blair and Kantor were fired and Culligan was shelved, the presidency of Curtis went by default to Clifford.

At this stage of Curtis's eccentric history—November, 1964—the most important figure in its affairs was a man Friedrich never met, Serge Semenenko, the Russian-born, Harvard-educated "mystery man of finance," the rescuer of corporations which could not be saved by procrustean bankers. Since he had arranged \$35 million of financing for Curtis, Semenenko was in a position to approve or veto any important decision affecting the affairs of Curtis. One thing he wanted was an editor for the editorless *Saturday Evening Post*—"which is what we need most," as he put it when he phoned me at home on December 25, 1964.

Friedrich lists eighteen men rumored as editor of the *Post*. There were quite a few more than

that; they were all seriously considered as possibilities by Miller and me, and about half of their names were relayed to Clifford and Semenenko:

Wade Nichols, *Good Housekeeping*; John Fischer, *Harper's*; Thomas Griffith, Edward Thompson, Roy Rowan, Philip Kunhardt, and David Maness, *Life*; Joseph J. Thorndike, *American Heritage*; Robert Stein, *McCall's*; Robert Elson, Time, Inc.; Theodore H. White; Louis G. Cowan, Chilmark Press; Jess Gorkin, *Parade*; Anthony Lewis and Harrison E. Salisbury, *New York Times*; Lewis Gillenson, *Esquire* Books; Thomas Braden, California newspaper publisher (later a Washington columnist); Gordon Manning, *Newsweek*; Robert Manning, *Atlantic*; Ken Purdy, free-lance; John Denson, *New York Journal-American*; Clay Felker, *New York Herald Tribune* Sunday Magazine; Marvin Barrett, *Show*; Simon Michael Bessie, Athenaeum Press; and David Brown, Twentieth-Century Fox.

Some of these gentlemen will be surprised to see their names listed. Most will remember a pleasant lunch, I hope, at 21, Maud Chez Elle, the Coffee House, or Brussels, or Sardi's East.

Three prospective candidates were actually offered the editor's job, after a fashion: Reuven Frank of NBC, producer of the Huntley-Brinkley Show (with which he had become bored); Maitland Edey of Time-Life Books (he had just finished editing the Nature Series and was willing to take another job rather than start another series); and Eric Severeid, CBS's resident intellectual.

Semenenko was addicted to professional headhunters—sometimes called "executive placement agencies"—which usually seek out presidents of corporations. Therefore, forty-four-year-old Reuven Frank was surprised to be spotted by one of these agencies, Boyden Associates. Miller and I were surprised, too, but that was the way Semenenko worked. We flirted with Frank for about a month. In a conference with us on December 29 Clifford confirmed an offer to him of \$100,000 a year. The Boyden man said Frank also wanted a five-year contract, stock option on 10,000 shares, editorial freedom, and an incentive plan after three years based on profits. Clifford, who had been a vice president of NBC and RCA, said he would have to see his old boss, General David Sarnoff,



to find out whether Frank could get out of his contract before it expired in July. Several times Clifford reported back that he hadn't been able to see Sarnoff. Once he talked to Robert Kintner, president of NBC, who exploded and said, "We've just signed Frank to a new show." That's a lie, said Frank's lawyer. On January 6, 1965, Clifford said NBC was adamant; Frank would have to live up to his contract and could not come to Curtis.

It appeared that Clifford didn't want a new editor, and Friedrich's book makes clear that he decided even before he became president that Emerson was his man. I have rarely seen anyone captivated as completely as Clifford. He hung on to Emerson's cornpone jokes like a cat watching a piece of moving string. Yet, prodded as he was by Semenenko, Clifford continued to tell me and Miller to find a new editor. Sometimes he rebelled. At the February board meeting he acidly told the

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"I tell you...  
we are not going  
to hire Severeid..."

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directors that hiring an editor was his job; they could fire him if they didn't like his selections.

On March 4 Miller and I drove to Philadelphia with John Mack Carter and other *Ladies' Home Journal* editors for a budget meeting. When we saw Bill Emerson sitting in Clifford's office we suspected that he had come to get word of his appointment; for the first time since Blair's October revolution, the *Post* would have an editor. "I had pressure put on me, and I had to do it," Clifford explained to me, in the men's room, of all places. "I told Bill I might put somebody in over him, and he didn't like it. Call the top man executive editor, editor-in-chief, or something like that." Then, to my surprise he said he would still like to see Maitland Edey, who had been interviewed twice and had got the impression that he had been offered the *Post* editorship. The mixup may have been my fault, but I believe it was Miller's. Both of us had talked to Edey.

Edey went to Philadelphia March 9. He was quite sarcastic when he reported the results to me: "The rifle you aimed at me turned out to be a shotgun. I went there to discuss financial terms, but Clifford only wanted to have a chat. . . . You've got to get your authority cleared in Philadelphia." He was right, of course, but who could interpret Clifford's intentions?

From the men's-room encounter in Philadelphia I drove to Washington for a longstanding luncheon date with Eric Severeid, subject unspecified. As we walked out the Carlton Hotel door, I offhandedly mentioned the *Post* editorship and found that Severeid was interested. (Clifford had already approved an approach to Severeid, saying to Miller, "Great, great, the sky is the limit.") But I wasn't offering anybody else any jobs until I knew what was in Clifford's mind. When Miller and I lunched with Severeid March 12, Miller mentioned \$100,000 "if the job opens up."

Meantime, Semenenko and his new man on the board, Newton Minow, former chairman of the FCC, had become interested in Severeid. Both of them were as determined to get a new editor as Clifford was to keep the one he had. A luncheon date was finally arranged for April 14 at Semenenko's apartment at the Pierre Hotel on Fifth Avenue, with Severeid and Semenenko's lawyer, Peter Coogan, also present. Semenenko asked a lot of questions about magazine editing, which I had to answer, of course, since Eric was not a magazine editor—yet. After an unsatisfactory two hours Semenenko said, "Bob Sherrod ought to be the editor." I said, "Thanks, no. No retreats."

On the day before this luncheon I felt obligated to tell Clifford about it (as I informed Semenenko). Clifford blew up: "I'm fed up with Semenenko! Curtis isn't incurring any more obligations without my knowing about it! I tell you flatly, we are not going to hire Severeid. If Semenenko wants to get somebody else to run the company, he can do it. I've told him that." Semenenko always cast these encounters in a different light. "Mac sometimes gets a little upset," he said, "but he always apologizes."

The odd thing was that Severeid heated up as Curtis cooled off. Now he wanted to negotiate—with Minow (to whom Clifford was barely speak-

ing). By early May the Severeid story had reached several newspaper columns, but soon the idea vanished from the papers and from our minds.

Their Curtis ventures hurt none of these three; in fact, all have flourished. Clifford bitterly resented my arranging Severeid's luncheon with Semenenko. I began to boil, too, and I sat down and wrote a five-page memo, detailing how Clifford had approved every step we had taken with Severeid. Nothing was hidden from him. "Don't write memos," Clifford replied. "Anybody that writes memos must be writing them for somebody else. You can always get me on the phone."

I told Clifford I wanted out. I had had enough. He said, "I'll back you up, whatever you do. But suit yourself." Semenenko said, "Hold on a few months. We are going to get a new president soon." But in the fall of 1965 Clifford sold, for \$24 million, the rights to ore discovered fortuitously under Curtis' Ontario timberlands, giving him almost complete independence of Semenenko. I went to Russia to write one more piece for the *Post*, then came back and resigned by telegram. I didn't even negotiate a settlement as officers customarily did (I had been a vice president for a year), so walking out probably cost me \$50,000. But I felt I wanted nothing from the Curtis Publishing Company, vintage 1966, and nothing from the *Post*, which was to endure two and one-half years longer.

The best part of Friedrich's big book is the last 30 per cent, which includes much dialogue between him and Ackerman. The two warily circle each other, testing each other's strength after the fashion of the Negro detective (Sidney Poitier) and the Mississippi sheriff (Rod Steiger) in the movie *In the Heat of the Night*. And winding up with the same mutual respect. That is, according to Friedrich. Ackerman doesn't refer to Friedrich in his book, and Emerson gets a single mention; these omissions are probably due to Ackerman's disability as a chronicler.

Friedrich won a few of the arguments, including refusing to endorse either Humphrey or Nixon in his election-year editorial. But Ackerman persuaded Friedrich more often. (Emerson, the titular editor during the *Post's* last four years, spent most of his time making hilarious Minnie Pearl-type

speeches to advertisers, so the running of the magazine was left to Friedrich.) Ackerman seems to have had an easy time persuading the editors to remake the magazine—remove a short story by Shirley Anne Grau, put in a William Saroyan, take out a piece about Lady Bird Johnson's tour of Texas, and a story about a lady racing driver.

"It was difficult to argue with Ackerman," Friedrich writes, "not just because he was president of the corporation, or because he spoke very forcefully about what he liked and didn't like, but because he was often right." An astonishing concession from an editor who could be highly moralistic about others failing to fend off "the business side."

Friedrich's treatment of friend and enemy alike is consistently malicious. A number of errors creep into the book, such as an account of a mythical meeting between Douglas Black of Doubleday and Milton Gould, the most aggressive of the Curtis

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" 'There never was  
such a magazine.'  
Nonsense..."

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directors ("I never met Black in my life," says Gould). Friedrich unaccountably and inexcusably compresses the editors' and publishers' second strike threat of October 10-11, 1964, into one day, which leaves several false impressions. He knew better because he wrote me last year and asked how some of the details appeared to me.

The story of the strike, which was led by the Blair-Kantor *duumvir*, is told from the viewpoint of an insider, since Friedrich himself signed on as a rebel. The Wally Butts-Bear Bryant libel suit, which cost Curtis at least a million dollars and immeasurable prestige, is spelled out in detail (Blair, the editor, blamed one of his staff, as he does in his novel).

Friedrich reveals that the *Post's* famous 1964 editorial blast at Barry Goldwater, which contained mean words that should not be written about any man, had as its author a *Life* editorial writer,

William J. Miller, who was moonlighting for Blair at \$250 per throw. As in the case of the libelous Bryant-Butts article, Blair did not subject the Goldwater diatribe to his assistants' evaluation. The cost in advertising cancellations was \$3 million. (At the time, as I recall, William Buckley's *National Review* noted a peculiar coincidence between phrases appearing in *Life* and *Post* editorials, and asked "what's going on here?")

Nonetheless, Blair comes nearer to being Friedrich's hero than anyone else. "I admired his dedication and enthusiasm," says Friedrich. "He was what the Germans call a *Mensch*." But one quotation from Blair's 1,000-page unpublished manuscript—which provided Friedrich with much of his material—goes a long way to describe this strange *Mensch*:

As a small boy, a Catholic in hard-rock Baptist South Georgia, I was a sissie, a loner, a reader, something of a mama's boy. . . . I was regularly beaten up by the town bullies, disrobed, humiliated. As a teen-ager I suppose I overreacted to that, and for a long time I did crazy things to test my fear. I was the first to smoke, drink, get laid, to own a car (and thus to drag race).

By the time he came to work for the *Post* Blair's proudest boast was, "I do not know the emotion called fear." We should have been warned; a little fear can be a good thing, as a cautionary factor against libel or in a suicidal rebellion against authority.

Friedrich, in summarizing the Friedrich *Post*, says, "there never was such a magazine." Nonsense. In comparing the 1962 *Post* to the magazine's final issues, I can't see much improvement in seven years of thrashing and bashing—and the 1962 *Post* was in a crucial period of transition from the typographical monstrosity of 1961. The 1969 *Post* is pitched on a slightly higher intellectual level, maybe, but this is a magazine for the masses, not for the *Harper's* audience.

I chose at random the June 23, 1962, issue of the *Post*—that was the week of the announcement that we were moving from Philadelphia to New York. George Hughes illustrated its cover: two maids at a yacht club peeling potatoes while dangling their toes from the dock. The *SPEAKING OUT* is "America the Ugly," by Stewart Alsop—"Our once-lovely land has become a garish, tasteless,

messy junk heap." There are articles by a physical education expert on "Toughening Our Soft Generation"; a piece about Rudy Vallee's comeback in the musical hit *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*; the third installment of lawyer Edward Bennett Williams' memoirs, "The Cases of Goldfine and Costello"; an exposé of the Billie Sol Estes scandal by the Texas correspondent who broke the story; three short stories, including one by Ray Bradbury.

The February 8, 1969, issue contains a *SPEAKING OUT* entitled "School Is Bad for Children"—an example of inept titling that cursed the Friedrich *Post* (the piece advocates modernizing the curriculum). There are three case histories about soldiers wounded in Vietnam, plus a piece on Vietnam by Senator Fulbright saying what he had said a thousand times before; an article on Soul Music, and one on Synanon (rehabilitating narcotics addicts in California—which everyone else had already written about). The strangest feature, bewilderingly illustrated on the cover, is about an artist who makes big murals out of beaverboard. This one is titled "Anybody Want to Buy Chicago?" (That is, the Chicago skyline cut out of beaverboard.) The cartoons are pointless, but less so than a column by editor Emerson about his vacation which is displayed up front on the contents page.

The dying *Post* was epitomized in the February 22 issue, which never reached the newsstands. It had ready for engraving a Valentine Day's cover, which meant it would have lain on the newsstands eleven days after Valentine's, as dead all that time as yesterday's TV program listing. Despite such evidence, Friedrich blames the demise of the *Post* on the profit system:

It deserved to live—we lost not only an independent voice in American society but an irreplaceable part of our own national past—the vitality of the press lies in its variety, in the competitiveness of ideas rather than of advertising rates.

There is certainly some validity in the idea of upgrading the quality of mass communications, whether on the air or in print. But our old beloved *Post* in its moribund days was not deserving of subsidy, even if they had been passing it out, which they weren't. I doubt that they will.

## Books noted

A UNION OF INDIVIDUALS, *The Formation of the American Newspaper Guild, 1933-1936*. By Daniel J. Leab. Columbia University Press. \$10.

□ On August 7, 1933 Heywood Broun used his column in the New York *World-Telegram* to advocate a union of newspaper reporters. Exactly three years later—on August 7, 1936—President William Green publicly granted an American Federation of Labor charter to the officers of the American Newspaper Guild, the most important of whom were Broun, president, and New York *Times*man Jonathan Eddy, secretary.

During the intervening three years there had occurred progressive abandonment of hope by a majority of newsmen (and publishers, too) that the organization would be professional rather than trade unionish. This occurred with the publishers' support of an NRA newspaper code that set outrageously low salary minima and included no mention of unfair business practices. Several firings of Guild leaders—mostly those of Louis Burgess, San Francisco *Examiner*; Dean Jennings, San Francisco *Call-Bulletin*, and Morris Watson, Associated Press—further shook the confidence of the "sweetness and light" segment of the approximately 100 local groups which sprang up all over the country. A contributing factor to the growing disillusionment was the reluctance of the Roosevelt Administration to offend journalistic management.

Those of us who lived through those crucial years certainly applaud the task that Associate Dean Leab of Columbia College has performed. The chronology is complete: the birth of the Guild September 15, 1933; the first written agreement with a publisher, J. David Stern of the Philadelphia *Record*, April 8, 1934; the first picket line July 7, 1934, against Samuel I. Newhouse's Long Island *Daily Press*; the first strike vote, August 29, 1934, at the *Jewish Daily Bulletin*; the first "real showdown" which began November 17, 1934, with a walkout at the Newark *Ledger* (to last nineteen weeks); and so on through the crucial victory over

William Randolph Hearst's *Wisconsin News* in Milwaukee in mid-1936.

To say that these aggressive actions pained a large number of news gatherers who had a traditional white-collar attitude would be a masterpiece of understatement. There was, in fact, constant turmoil in the ranks. Professor Leab correctly indicates that a great deal of it was a hinterland suspicion of the New York "crowd." He states in his notes that he read the correspondence between Eddy and me when I was secretary of the St. Louis Guild. Most of it was trivial. A typical wrangle resulted from Eddy's sending out an appeal for personal news notes about members with which to brighten the *Guild Reporter* and thereafter chastising me for wasting my time on trivialities. I never met the man, but I shared the inability of many others to get along with him, at the same time recognizing his vigorous devotion to the cause. He attended to the organizational details while Broun, whom we all worshipped as a father image, provided the inspiration.

In my opinion this book is just one chapter and one footnote too short. It ends with the affiliation of the ANG with the AFL and merely indicates, in a parenthetical clause three pages from the end, that in less than a year the ANG changed its affiliation to the CIO, which was just being formed. By not continuing his narrative to include details of that shift in affiliation, the author gives a mistaken underemphasis to the industrial vs. craft unionization issue throughout the life of the Guild. Leab does mention that Broun preferred industrial unionization, and the fact that financial aid provided by the United Mine Workers and other CIO unions kept the Guild alive, especially during the Milwaukee strike. He hints at the importance of the issue by citing the minority report from the St. Louis Guild, which opposed the AFL as "a crumbling institution which in its present setup may not survive another six months."

All of which suggests the missing footnote. It should be to the article, "Are These Wages Decent?" by Dr. Willard Grosvenor Bleyer, director of the School of Journalism of the University of Wisconsin, in *Quill* for July, 1934. In 1934, "Daddy" Bleyer emerged almost alone among educators with the guts to tell off publishers in vigor-



ous terms. The quotation that Leab cites to indicate Bleyer preferred professional organizing to labor unions was from a 1919 book, long before the Depression changed the circumstances. In the *Quill* article which Leab overlooked, Dr. Bleyer lambasted the salary scale in the proposed NRA newspaper code, showing that it would mean that the proposed minimum of \$12 per week, with learners at \$8.40 a week, would apply to nearly two-thirds of all dailies in the country. In the pay scale and other provisions of the code are the reasons why the Guild succeeded.

Unfortunately, the American Newspaper Guild has not yet attained sufficient economic security to make a greater drive for professionalism possible. There are, however, among its national leaders some who hope that such a day will come. So do we surviving veterans of the early organizing days.

CURTIS D. MacDOUGALL

Dr. MacDougall is a professor at the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern.

PRESS POWER: A Study of Axel Springer. By Hans Dieter Müller. (Translated by J. A. Cole.) Macdonald & Co., Ltd., (London).

□ This brilliantly written and deeply disturbing book examines the career of the most successful newspaper publisher Europe has ever seen, Axel Caesar Springer. Springer controls 40 per cent of daily newspaper circulation in West Germany, more than 80 per cent of the regional papers, 90 per cent of Sunday circulation. *Bild-Zeitung*, the most spectacular of his successes, sells in excess of 4 million copies daily through a mixture of poster headlines, crude titillation, ingenious promotion stunts, and Springer's sedulous cultivation of the *volk* mystique, playing upon the hopes and fears of the German masses. *Die Welt*, one of the two quality dailies claiming national attention, is his also.

Springer makes an elusive villain. His goodwill is worn on his sleeve. Who could be against a man who endowed a history chair at Brandeis University? His vast and magnificently efficient organization (*Springer-Post*, its house organ, resembles a fat issue of *Life*) is decentralized. In professional

competence, from editing to printing, its products are exemplary. His climb to prominence began with next to nothing in 1946—*Hör zu* (*Listen In*) was a weekly devoted exclusively to radio. It invited reader response, and from this Springer learned to give his customers what they wanted. Pretty girls. Dreams of happiness. Animal stories. Friendly advice, like "Be kind to one another." *Hör zu* grew into a fat family publication now circulating 4 million copies, while its publisher turned what he had learned to daily journalism, first in the Hamburg *Adendblatt*, then in *Bild*.

What is the matter with this? It is not only that Springer has created what is relatively the most powerful communications empire in any modern nation, with more power for good or ill than any man should have, but that Springer's exercise of it poses a threat to the German state—a view being developed by the author, a German journalist, when the anti-Springer riots of 1968 gave his thesis unexpected thrust. Hans Müller's point is that the huge communications machine, nationalistic, anti-communist, strongly conservative in outlook, may effectively stifle parliamentary democracy in West Germany. The case is far from closed. As if in recognition that no one man should have so much, Springer disposed of some of his magazines just before the Gunther Commission recommended the splitting up such combinations in 1968, but the newspapers continue undisturbed.

Considering the scope of this volume and its importance, it is too compressed. The author's information pours out helter-skelter, and we glimpse Springer himself, who sat for interviews even though he knew the book would be critical, only fleetingly. Müller is at his eloquent best in considering the implications of what could become another German tragedy.

LOUIS M. STARR

THE INFORMATION WAR. By Dale Minor. Hawthorn. \$6.95.

□ Dale Minor's book is so in step with the editorial drumbeat of the *Review* that it is not at all difficult to applaud it and recommend its reading. A correspondent in such hot spots as Selma and Vietnam who has served on the managerial staff of

Pacifica Radio's WBAI in New York, he pulls together a wide array of incidents that typify forces at work in American society hampering and impeding the flow of information. Direct government censorship is an object of his attack. Propagandizing, another. But government is not the only misinformers. The media themselves—concerned for profits, moving toward monopoly, and saddled with their own formulas and traditions—become impediments to their own function.

The book's best point finds Mr. Minor suggesting that it may be that the public itself wishes to deceive itself. "Growing weary of democracy," he senses. The public is not believing the media, and this suspicion of the institution of the free press he sees as a kind of "early warning symptom" of a more serious sickness of our democracy.

RICHARD T. BAKER

TO KILL A MESSENGER. By William Small. Hastings House. \$8.95.

□ "Television," writes CBS News Washington bureau manager William Small, "is the first development of consequence in modern history to reverse trends taking public matters away from the public." In fourteen somewhat rambling but readable chapters, he develops this thesis—how coverage of the McCarthy hearings, political conven-

tions, racial problems, the Vietnam war, and other major events have offered "Everyman . . . a chance to view the whole of which we are a part." Flawed as it is by graceless writing and loose organization, the book has enough fascinating anecdotes, significant examples, and memorable quotations to make it a useful addition to the history of TV in the Fifties and Sixties.

THE ADVERSARIES. By William L. Rivers. Beacon Press. \$7.50.

□ A companion to the 1965 Washington press study *The Opinionmakers*, this book concentrates on various aspects of the adversary relationship—a "delicate balance of tact and antagonism, cooperation and conflict"—that the author believes must be the norm for press-government relations. Subjects include government-employed professional "persuaders," the "sweetheart" publisher, the journalist as crony, government-controlled journalism abroad, "abrasive" minority-audience journalist, and "manufactured" news. Vice President Agnew, says the author, might have contributed to a healthy adversary relationship, but "Mr. Agnew was wrong in nearly every particular he chose to outline" and "if criticism is to be useful, it should not come from officials whose words may be fearsome."

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## Notes on the art

### The scoopery game

■ There is no point naming names or giving real examples. We all do it; but when have we last asked why?

a) President Poke will nominate Donald Lethargy tomorrow to be the next ambassador to France, the Scoopville *Times* has learned.

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c) The National Commission on Highway Slaughter will recommend in its report this weekend that personnel at toll booths test the blood and breath of all drivers.

d) District Attorney Angle plans to call his key witness, Hilda McCallit, to the stand next Tuesday when testimony begins in the trial of the Wasteland Three.

There is not a reporter worthy of the name who has not stooped to such scoops.

The men in the pressroom are supposed to feel humiliated because they failed to hear the latest gossip. The editors in the office are supposed to think that their man knows everything sooner—and therefore better—than anyone else's man. The competition is supposed to run itself silly chasing the facts needed to catch up with our hero. And the reader-listener, though invariably ignorant of the Great Journalistic Feat that lurks behind such prediction of coming events, is supposed to feel that reporters and media that correctly predict the

future must be well informed, well connected, and well deserving of his confidence.

Ridiculous.

The reporter who wastes time trying to learn what without his effort would become public knowledge the next morning is in fact failing to do something that might add to the sum of human information. The editor who rewards such empty enterprise by giving the story greater prominence than he would if others shared his secret is encouraging show-offs, discouraging serious students of events, and misleading the reader. The reader-listener who mimics the professionals' habit of comparing networks and newspapers to discover which one was "first" with news that was inevitably coming to public attention deserves what he gets.

What does he get?

In Case a) reporter Bill Sleuth discovered from a good source, or from the wife of the ambassador-to-be, or from the girl he has been dating at the French embassy, that the President is about to make an announcement. If he would wait till next morning, the announcement would be handed to him with biographies and pictures attached; the candidate might be available for interrogation; the important Senators who must confirm him might be in a position to comment; and assorted experts would be in a position to say something useful about the event.

But Reporter Sleuth has been taught never to wait with an exclusive tip. So he drops everything and makes some calls to corroborate the information. Usually this is easy enough. Someone has seen the mimeograph stencil at the White House. Or someone will agree to grunt assent or at least to assure the reporter that he can print the news without looking foolish the next morning. At worst, if the President's breakfast is unsavory, our hero will look foolish and he must develop a story about why

his prediction failed to come true or why the President changed his mind. More likely, he will be proved right, if not prescient.

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In the case of b), the source, of course, is a disgruntled accountant in the budget bureau of Gagland city, or one of the Mayor's aspiring opponents who wants a red-ink headline two days' running. Our reporter is not surprised that there is a deficit—everyone knew the Mayor was struggling to make ends meet—but "about \$3 million," rather than \$2.5 million or \$3.5 million, is a New Fact. And New Facts, our reporter has been taught, are the essence of news. The reporter does not know much yet about the difficult choices the Mayor had to make in composing the budget. He doesn't know whether the hospital department made out better than the police. Indeed, New Fact will have to run at the head of a story full of only surmisable and old facts. And for this premature piffle, our paper must consume any number of trees hauled down from Canada to make newsprint and add further to the strain of the already confused reader-listener.

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hero's readers have read his original version. Thereupon the rest of the competition will be roused from sleep to give its readers and listeners the same scoop, all of which will hit the majority of readers and listeners simultaneously at breakfast time. So everyone will breakfast with the New Fact, inadequately researched and improperly explained, while a now-tired band of reporters sets out to render sleepy and sloppy service on something that probably matters. And when the Gagland budget is published at last in all its miserable gray matter, the newsmen who care about budgets will have to start all over again while those who don't will feel vindicated in their haste.

In case c), our reporter needed even less enterprise than in the earlier scoops. The National Commission on Highway Slaughter had sent him its report, by special messenger, or a favored commissioner had slipped him a private copy to make a friend. This 400-page volume is being distributed several days in advance so that reporters who must reduce it to 800 words might read the material, think about it, perhaps even discuss it with someone knowledgeable.

But most reporters do not dare take the time that is being offered. They know there is an editor somewhere who scoffs at "release dates" (or resents the Commission's habit of favoring the newsmagazines over the nightly television shows by always releasing news for Mondays). In fact, all reporters everywhere caution their editors that the Slaughter report will probably be published before the designated date and that the stories better be in type and on tape. All will want to be in position to jump as soon as anyone anywhere leaps. And with everyone thus poised, someone is bound to dive to make sure that he is the first to make a small splash. Reader-listener gets all wet. Imagine the calamity that would result if most newspapers and net-

works, in an act of service to readers and themselves, heeded the release date and let Eager Beaver go his silly way.

Case d) differs from the rest only in that District Attorney Angle provoked the silliness. If our reporter failed to give him the desired publicity, the DA will tell his dirty little secret to another reporter. If our reporter is over thirty, he may actually believe himself negligent if he turns down a fact. If he is under thirty, he may simply lack the experience or fortitude needed to cope with the editors' annoyance when the competition hears about Hilda McCallit first. Either way, our hero reasons that he will be forced to report the story, and he would rather be "ahead" than "beaten." So Angle carries the day. Competing reporters, under instructions to avenge the scoop, pry another little trial tactic out of the defense attorneys, and either the trial of the Wasteland Three proceeds merrily to unfold in the press and on the air or the reader is swamped with an indefensible run of indigestible tidbits.

Actually, I love scoops.

Like information that is being withheld from the public.

Like insight that takes a New Fact and adds it to three old ones to produce a new reality.

Like analysis that explains why what everyone knows to have happened really happened.

Like a trend that only my team had the wit to discover.

Like a shrewd question, terse quotation, or graphic explanation that only we had the time, patience, tact, and luck to obtain.

When you think about it, a scoop that is worthy of the name has scope. Get it first, if it will last.

MAX FRANKEL

Max Frankel is chief of the New York Times Washington bureau.

## Apollo 13 and the wires

■ Monday, April 13 was a quiet day in the pressroom of the Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston. The Apollo 13 astronauts, on their way to man's third moon landing, had just one big job: their first inspection of the lunar landing craft Aquarius. The uneventful inspection, beamed back to earth by TV, was watched by reporters looking for a new lead. But the TV networks, following the pattern of their early coverage of the mission, merely taped the picture to play back on scheduled newscasts.

At 9:07 p.m. (CST), with the cry from astronaut James A. Lovell Jr., that "Hey, we've got a problem here!" the character of the mission changed. Those six words triggered one of the most dramatic stories of the decade—a four-day epic as the Apollo 13 astronauts struggled to return their spacecraft to earth.

Unfortunately, the two major American wire services couldn't tell a great story in the way that it unfolded. They tried to make it even better with sensationalized, scare leads. Associated Press and to a lesser extent United Press International insisted on hyping a story that was so good on its face that people all over the world anxiously awaited every development.

The two wire services hit a nadir of bad reporting on April 15—two days before successful splashdown—with scare leads such as these:

Space Center, Houston (UPI) — Officials discovered Wednesday that the crippled Apollo 13 spaceship is slightly off course and will miss the earth — dooming the pilots to death in space — unless they can change their trajectory.

Space Center, Houston, AP — Mission Control reported Wednesday the crippled Apollo 13 spaceship was off course. The three American astronauts must make a successful midcourse correction or it will miss the earth by 104 miles and be lost in space.

That was merely the worst in a series of wire service scare leads that prompted William Hines, the tart-tongued Chicago *Sun-Times* science editor who was covering his twenty-second manned space flight, to say over Westinghouse radio:

This has been a flight full of crises, full of emergencies, none of which have put the astronauts in immediate peril of their lives. Yet forever we have had stories coming out, edition after edition, saying precisely that these people are at the edge of doom. Let's let the doom get a little closer to striking before we start reporting it.

Added Westinghouse's space reporter, Jim Slade:

This story is dramatic enough in itself without having to color it. It doesn't need color. It has all the drama anyone needs to have. It is gripping enough by itself.

Other veteran space writers—including Tom O'Toole of the *Washington Post*, Mark Bloom of the *New York Daily News*, John Noble Wilford of the *New York Times*, Rudy Abramson of the *Los Angeles Times*, and Victor McElheny of the *Boston Globe*—warned their desks about the inaccurate and hyped-up wire service bulletins. Reuters' five-man space bureau was under constant pressure from the London editors to match the AP and UPI sensationalized leads. One service message from London to Houston ended, **TIS COLD COMFORT TO BE RIGHT WHEN SOMEONE ELSE IS GETTING THE PLAY.** To which Alan Paterson, chief of Reuters' American service and head of the space team, replied:

It is not generally felt we should strive to be wrong in doubtful company. Feel Houston team must tell it like it is and cannot sacrifice cardinal principle of accuracy for the sake of getting into a scare story war of nerves between American agencies. FYI Associated's latest lead is already a running joke here with representatives of NYK Times, Washington Post, Daily News and other responsible newspapers.

One Reuters lead, by William Humphries, alluded to a scare story by saying that "Mission Control sought to allay fears that their (the astronauts') service module was disintegrating."

Even AP and UPI veteran space writers such as Howard Benedict (AP) and Ed Delong and Al Rossiter (UPI) acknowledged privately that their services were running away with the story. Hines said that "some smart asses—from New York" took over the story from the experts and insisted on jazzing it up. Rossiter and his boss, UPI vice president and editor Roger Tatarian, said their service was being tarred with AP mistakes.

Tatarian, though, acknowledges in a letter to *Washington Post* managing editor Eugene Patterson that UPI's lead dooming the spacemen to death "strikes too alarming a note. 'If we had to do it over again,' he continues, 'we would certainly avoid that death in space angle.'" His letter was in reply to a memo from me to Patterson complaining about the wire service coverage of Apollo 13. Patterson forwarded the memo to AP, UPI, and Reuters. "I'm damned sorry we went off the mark in this one lead," Tatarian wrote Patterson, "and I am even sorrier that Stu Auerbach uses this one specific complaint to indict our [entire] coverage. . . ."

Tatarian's letter, however, shows a complete lack of knowledge about space flights that probably contributed to the wire services' sensationalized leads describing the Apollo 13 spacecraft as off course. NASA officials never said the spaceship was off course. To them, Apollo 13 was on a free-return trajectory to earth that required a routine mid-course correction. Their definition of free-return trajectory is one that will get the spaceship back to earth with only small burns of the steering rockets, not the main engine. Tatarian, though, sees it differently. "When a course has to be corrected, it must surely be something other than the desired one," he writes.

Mid-course corrections are programmed into every mission, both on the way to and on the way back from the moon. They are con-



"Scare" Apollo 13 headlines (top to bottom) in Rochester Times-Union, San Bernardo Sun, and New York Post.

sidered routine. Granted this was not a routine mission and the crippled spacecraft added a new element to the maneuver. But the lunar module's descent propulsion engine had worked twice before on more critical occasions and there was plenty of fuel for it to work again. Even if it did fail, there were four other propulsion systems in reserve that could have turned the spacecraft, and there was plenty of time for other methods.

In fact, the wire services' own stories recognized this. After building up the straw man of death in space in their leads, both AP and UPI backed off in the second paragraph. AP said:

However, officials emphasized that the chances of making the small burn required, with the space-proven engine of the lunar module, are excellent. Even if that engine failed, the astronauts could then try again to get back



on course by using the small control jets on either the command ship or the lunar module.

UPI wrote:

Under normal conditions, the relatively minute course correction needed for a safe return of the three astronauts—James A. Lovell, John L. Swigert, and Fred W. Haise—would pose no problems. But in their patched-together spacecraft, every maneuver was fraught with danger.

If you have to knock down your lead with the second paragraph, there is something wrong.

AP also had the crew facing death from an excess of carbon dioxide in the cabin because an alarm bell rang. If they had been following the air-to-ground communications, they would have known that ground controllers expected the alarm to go off and were using it as a sign to change lithium hydroxide canisters.

A battery alarm rang one night. A wire service bulletin called it a new emergency. It turned out that one of the sensors wasn't working right.

Fred Haise noted that a four-inch-square piece of metal had floated by the lunar module. One wire service said the spaceship was falling apart.

It was cold—very cold—in the spaceship. The astronauts were very uncomfortable, but in no danger of freezing. One wire service reported that they were.

AP had a lead that the spacecraft was "tumbling out of control" when it was in a manually-set passive thermal control—the so-called barbecue mode designed to equalize the sun's heat on the spaceship. These were all hoked-up emergencies, designed not to tell a gripping story but to provide new leads and bulletins. They illustrate journalism at its worst.

Television, which gained a reputation as the live chronicler of the American space program, fell down, too, at the beginning of the emergency. Preferring to ration its live coverage to liftoff and the long lunar walks, the networks never bothered to pick up any of the

spacecraft TV broadcasts on the way to the moon. Then, late on the night of April 13, they were slow to break into their regular commercial programs to report on the space emergency.

The Apollo 13 flight presented legitimate hazards to the astronauts. It was one of the great dramas of man's space adventure. It needed no journalistic embellishment. Why did reporters for America's wire services allow themselves to be caught up in Hearstian exaggeration? Why did their editors allow it? Why did so many newspapers unquestioningly print the hypoed stories—usually with banner headlines [see illustrations]? It is past time for American journalists to examine the implications of these questions, and to change attitudes and practices accordingly.

STUART AUERBACH

Stuart Auerbach reports for the Washington Post.

## Experiment in Washington

■ If the now-celebrated case of Martha Mitchell and the deposed television editor served any constructive purpose, it was in focusing public attention on an experiment in television news that could have far-reaching significance. The WETA, Washington, *Newsroom* show, from which editor William Woestendiek was fired because his wife was press secretary to the wife of the Attorney General, is one of only four educational TV experiments wedding the visual medium with the print reporter. The pioneering of the four stations, all under Ford Foundation grants, eventually could provide American TV viewers with a new network of depth journalism going beyond the

quick-shot TV news that is commonplace on commercial television.

The Washington show actually is the most recent of the experimental *Newsrooms*. The real pioneer is the San Francisco version that started more than two years ago [see *CJR*, Summer, 1969]. A newspaper strike had created a near-vacuum of serious newsgathering in the city, leaving professional hands on the *Chronicle* idle. They were brought together at noncommercial station KQED in a city-room format to discuss news events they had covered. The result was lively, provocative, and informative. The Ford Foundation helped keep the show going after the strike, and earlier this year underwrote similar experiments on stations WQED in Pittsburgh and KERA in Dallas.

The Washington version, which went on the air last March 23, is particularly crucial to the experiment, and particularly promising because it is at a center of national newsgathering. While it must compete against some of the toughest commercial TV competition in its quest to provide new dimensions in depth and analysis, it also can draw on some of the most knowledgeable print journalists and leading news sources in the nation.

Operating on a one-year, \$750,000 grant and high hopes beyond that, WETA set out last fall to snare as editor a leading print journalist who had editing experience, knew Washington, and was enthusiastic about the experiment. Finding him was not easy, although the salary—finally set at \$50,000 during the search that ended with Woestendiek—was ample. Although Woestendiek had no real Washington experience, he had been a ranking editor at *Newsday*, the *Houston Post*, and *This Week*, and the strength of these credentials overcame that point. Besides, according to Lincoln Furber, the project director at WETA, it was decided that "fresh eyes on this city might be healthy."



The next step was to gather a staff. More than one hundred applications arrived. As in the KQED effort, newspaper reporters with little or no TV experience were sought in an attempt to avoid the cosmetic journalism that has marked much of commercial television news—especially on the local level. That is, the importance of the appearance and delivery of the reporter were to be sharply downgraded in favor of his newsgathering talents and expertise about his beat or subject matter. Instead of merely skimming the cream off a story, as often is done on network news shows, the reporter was expected to bring to his oral account the same depth and analysis he would offer for the printed page.

Beyond that, an integral element was to be spontaneous and vigorous cross-examination of reporters by their colleagues and the editor. The objective obviously was to bring to the viewer an insight into the cauldron from which any vibrant and responsible news organization distills the day's most significant news and interpretation. However, unlike the KQED show, which took an intentionally liberal posture as a counter to conservative newspapers and TV in the San Francisco area, WETA's *Newsroom* was to be scrupulously non-ideological—a premise that undoubtedly was a determinant in the conflict-of-interest row to come.

The staff that finally was put together—in a salary range of from \$15,000 to \$30,000—was largely an unknown quantity. Only one prominent veteran Washington reporter—diplomatic correspondent Warren Unna of the *Washington Post*—was included. Peter Janssen, at the White House, had been *Newsweek's* education editor in New York and earlier an education writer for the *Newhouse Newspapers* in Washington; David Jewell, assigned to Congress, had been on the *Washington Post* city staff; Columbus Smith, covering the Pentagon, came from a Dayton paper. In the first

month at least, this limited Washington experience not only left gaps in the straight reportage but also produced thin and uncertain commentary, from which it was difficult to construct significant staff give-and-take.

Also, despite the planned emphasis on informality and spontaneity, the camera in those first weeks seemed to intimidate some of the reporters; their delivery was apt to be not casual but nervous and stilted. Some wrote out their daily stories in newspaper style and read them, thereby accentuating their stiffness and lack of confidence. The uneven quality of the staff often led to an imbalance in the dialogue, with individual self-assurance by one or two sometimes dominating the discourse, whether or not the views asserted so confidently were insightful.

To bring more authority to the nightly discussion, nine prominent contributing editors were signed up, at \$50 an appearance, to participate on a rotating basis: Tom Wicker, associate editor of the *New York Times*; Hugh Sidey, Washington bureau chief of *Time*; Bonnie Angelo of Sidey's staff; Charles McDowell, Washington correspondent of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*; David Kraslow, news editor of the Los Angeles *Times* Washington bureau; Peter Lisagor, Washington bureau chief of the *Chicago Daily News*; Ernest B. Furgurson, columnist for the *Baltimore Sun*; Marianne Means, columnist for the *Hearst Newspapers*; Warren Berry, Washington correspondent of *Forbes*. (The first four quit over the Woestendiek firing.)

In most cases, they added strength to the show, but in those first weeks there nevertheless often was, overall, an aura of groping. Woestendiek's inexperience in the Washington area showed through in small ways, and in fact some staff members were concerned just prior to his discharge that the editor was not providing needed direction.

The typical format was for Woe-

stendiek to call on each staff member for an opening "teaser" line about his night's story, then for each to go into an oral presentation in greater depth, with other staff members breaking in to ask questions to comment. Some reports were narrated over film clips; sometimes routine press conference excerpts, sometimes imaginative and probing feature stories. One good one was a closeup of a controversial experiment in communal living in a Maryland suburb.

But in those first weeks there was too much talk and not enough use of the visual; so much so, in fact, that it sometimes seemed the whole project could be transferred to radio without losing too much. According to Woestendiek, much of this was the fault of inadequate photo and film-processing equipment—rectified shortly.

Ironically, it took the Woestendiek-Mitchell affair to make most of the staff provocative and stimulating. In the wisest decision of the young show, the story was covered in depth. Two reporters, Peter Janssen and David Jewell, presented a comprehensive play-by-play of background conversations and pressures leading up to the editor's discharge, and then the hour was thrown open—or blasted open by the other staff members—to discussion. Other reporters immediately objected to the assignment of the Woestendiek story to Janssen and Jewell, who had been most aggressive in pressing WETA for a decision on the conflict-of-interest issue. It was a soul-baring catharsis that showed what this format can do when the participants know what they're talking about, are not intimidated by the camera, and bring conviction, commitment and even combativeness to what they say. But WETA can't fire an editor every week to keep the show lively. The staff will have to develop the same expertness in its news coverage and the same self-assurance in its commentary.

It was a most stormy beginning

for the *Newsroom* experiment in Washington, but the show is, after all, just that—an experiment that is feeling its way. Woestendiek had only begun to address the inevitable problems of trying something different and difficult when he was caught in the conflict-of-interest buzzsaw. It may be small consolation to him, but his troubles put *Newsroom* in the public eye in Washington when it needed to be. The experiment went forward with Ben C. Gilbert, a longtime Washington *Post* editor, adhering basically to the same format but on what appeared to be a tighter rein. The show should gain strength from the new community awareness of it. A year, however, is a very short time in which to forge a product that will link effectively the best of visual and print journalism.

JULES WITCOVER

Jules Witcover, of the Los Angeles *Times* Washington bureau, writes regularly for the *Review*.

## Dimout in Jackson

■ Coverage by the Jackson *Clarion-Ledger* of the May 13-15 disorder at Jackson State College provides a point-by-point validation of ghetto criticism of the press in the Kerner Commission report published two years ago.

The *Ledger* is the state's largest morning daily. It is the cornerstone on which the Hederman family has built a statewide publishing empire, including the state's largest afternoon daily, two weeklies, a third large daily in Hattiesburg, part ownership in radio and TV stations, a corner on the state government printing business, and other lucrative enterprises. The *Ledger* is the Hederman paper. The afternoon Jackson *Daily News* was a longtime rival acquired in the 1940s. The *Ledger*, much more

than the *Daily News*, speaks with the voice of the Mississippi establishment.

The Hedermans, staunch Southern Baptists and political conservatives, epitomize the white power structure in Mississippi. If an agency or institution wields official power here, chances are the brothers Bob, Henry, or Zach or cousin Tom have a hand in it or are close to someone who has.

Henry is a member of the Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning, which governs the eight state-supported colleges and universities. He also is president of the Jackson Chamber of Commerce. Zach is a member of the Mississippi Memorial Stadium Commission, which controls use of the modern stadium here. Bob is a member of the Pearl River Industrial Commission, which oversees Ross R. Barnett Reservoir, a burgeoning water recreational complex near here. His wife is on the State Library Commission. Tom is a member of the state Research and Development Council.

The *Ledger* and its sister publication, the Jackson *Daily News*, traditionally assay the political field to insure that at least one of them backs the winner in the governor's race. After dalliance with former Governor Ross Barnett, an also-ran in the first Democratic primary in 1967, the *Ledger* joined the *Daily News* behind Congressman John Bell Williams as he trounced political moderate William Winter in the runoff. The newspapers have become less blatantly racist since the 1950s and early 1960s. Then, their news and editorial pages reflected—and contributed to—the segregationist fanaticism which culminated in violence and bloodshed when Negro James Meredith entered the University of Mississippi in 1962.

In recent years, news of Negro activities and achievements has appeared with increasing frequency in both papers. But blacks have not gained access to society pages, and black obituaries are uncommon. The *Daily News* places a page of black news in papers carrier-delivered to black homes, but that news doesn't appear in papers sold on

the streets or delivered in white neighborhoods.

The Hederman papers have shown no inclination to explore the problems of blacks in Mississippi, or to use their influence to temper the truculent white supremacist policies of state political leaders. The papers have no rapport with black activist, or even moderate, leaders in this city where almost two-fifths of the 150,000 residents are black. Neither paper has made a noticeable effort to gain credibility in the black community. Neither has integrated its news staff.

When police responded to reports of disorder near Jackson State May 13, the *Ledger* police reporter took charge of coverage. He remained on the story throughout, and the *Ledger's* lead stories became a conduit for the police viewpoint to the virtual exclusion of all others. Of the 145 column inches the *Ledger* carried in the first three days of Jackson State coverage, 73 inches—more than half—came directly from police. Another 47 inches—about a third—came from the mayor and governor. From students, on-the-scene newsmen, NAACP officials, college faculty and officials, came 16 inches—about one-tenth of the total. Nowhere in the staff-written *Ledger* stories is there a hint that many eyewitnesses dispute the official contention that police fired only in direct response to sniper fire.

The New Orleans *Times-Picayune* and Memphis *Commercial Appeal* rival the *Ledger* in morning circulation in Mississippi. Each paper maintains a fulltime reporter in Jackson. Compare the lead stories in the May 16 *Ledger*, *Picayune*, and *Commercial Appeal*. The *Clarion-Ledger*:

Jackson police and Mississippi Highway Patrol officials Friday blamed dormitory snipers for a brief gun battle at Jackson State College that brought two deaths and nine injuries, one of the latter regarded as critical. They said gunshots were heard on the campus up to an hour-and-a-half before officers actually moved in to try to quell snipers.

Det. Chief M. B. Pierce . . . said policemen and patrolmen did not actually move into the campus

and return fire until after a fire truck and its crew had been fired upon. He quoted a columnist for a liberal Memphis, Tenn., newspaper as saying he "abandoned" the truck and its crew after a "volley of gunfire" was aimed at it from dormitory windows.

(A brief but intense telephone conversation between the *Commercial* reporter and the *Ledger* executive editor after this story hit the streets resulted in this version in a later edition of the *Ledger*: "He [Pierce] quoted . . . a columnist-reporter for the liberal Memphis, Tenn., *Commercial Appeal* as having told him that 'a volley' of shots burst from behind a building when the fire truck went onto the campus. . . .")

#### *Times-Picayune:*

JACKSON, Miss.—Federal and city investigations were ordered Friday into the deaths of two young blacks and wounding of a dozen others at Jackson State College after withering gunfire by officers ripped into a girls' dormitory in the early hours. . . .

An angry Negro community later blamed the gunfire on "racist" state highway patrolmen who launched a 30-second barrage of rifle and shotgun fire after hearing what they believed were two sniper shots. . . .

#### *Commercial Appeal:*

JACKSON, Miss., May 15.—Outraged Negro leaders demanded Friday that state officers who shot two youths to death and wounded nine others during an early morning confrontation at Jackson State College be prosecuted for murder and conspiracy.

State Highway Patrol officers, reportedly backed by city police, opened fire at a women's dormitory with rifles, pistols and shotguns on the West Jackson campus shortly after midnight Friday. . . .

There was sharp disagreement over reports of "sniper fire," which police said triggered the volley of gunfire. Jackson Det. Chief M. B. Pierce said there was evidence that officers were fired upon, but he declined to elaborate.

The *Picayune* story quoted wounded students, the mayor, police, black leader Charles Evers, TV newsmen on the scene when the shooting started, and a TV sound tape of the shooting. The *Commercial* story attributed information to wounded students, other student eyewitnesses, police, the mayor, the district attorney, and black leaders. The *Ledger* story attributed information to police, hospital sources, the mayor, and prepared statements by college groups and an NAACP official. No eyewitnesses other than police were mentioned in the *Ledger*. The *Ledger* reporter did not visit the campus, about a dozen blocks from the *Ledger* office.

The *Ledger* did not close its pages to black community reaction, however. In the May 16 home edition, the *Ledger* used an eight-inch AP story quoting an NAACP official who said, "There is no evidence that anyone saw a sniper or could indicate a possible direction of sniper fire." Throughout the next week, the *Ledger* used AP coverage of black community protest. But never did a *Ledger* reporter cover any black meeting or interview a black student. Never did the *Ledger* reporter waver in his use of the police "exchange of gunfire" line in recapping the events at Jackson State. Two examples:

MAY 18: The Negroes gathered . . . for a memorial service honoring two youths killed in an exchange of gunshots. . . .

MAY 23: Ultra-liberal members of Congress . . . visited the city . . . and denounced officers who fired back at sniping students. . . . Young Green was one of two persons killed in an exchange of gunfire a week ago. . . .

Never did the *Ledger* writer mention that the alleged sniper fire drew from lawmen a 30-second barrage which riddled the end of a women's dorm with more than 200 individual bullet holes. Never did he mention that no policeman, highway patrolman, National Guardsman, or any of their vehicles or equipment showed evidence of being hit by sniper fire. Never did he mention that lawmen used no

tear gas or attempted any crowd control measures. In short, never did he allow in his story the suggestion that police did anything other than respond in kind to gunfire from the dormitory. The *Ledger* stood alone in this narrow reporting of the story.

The *Jackson Daily News*, while relying as heavily as the *Ledger* on official sources, regularly included in accounts of the shooting a paragraph saying student witnesses deny that sniper fire provoked the police barrage. The *Daily News* reporting reflects a higher degree of professionalism, not a difference of editorial opinion. The *Daily News* cartoonist, for example, came forth with an editorial page drawing depicting a white hand labeled LAW AND ORDER vigorously restraining a black arm and hand brandishing a brick labeled ANARCHY.

Although the *Ledger* adopted the police viewpoint, its pages were open to dissent. Letters and resolutions criticizing the police version and charging that lawmen overreacted were printed regularly. But openness is no substitute for competent journalism. No number of letters to the editor can make up for failure to require fair and accurate coverage in each story. A competent AP story doesn't erase a biased staff-written story.

Readers outside Jackson received better information than those in Jackson. Both AP and UPI did competent jobs on the story, as did the *Times-Picayune* and the *Commercial Appeal*. In fact, reporters for the *Times-Picayune*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Greenville, Miss., Delta Democrat-Times* unearthed the only real scoops in the days following the killings.

How can one explain the *Ledger* coverage? "From the start, they played it like cops and robbers," said one ex-*Ledger* staff member. "You quote the cops, you don't quote the robbers."

It is more complex than that, however. The *Ledger* traditionally avoids stories criticizing state and local government. The Hederhans' political power is so pervasive that they can, by concerted effort, effect most political changes they think should be made. Criticism of state



and local government is in a real way criticism of the Hedermans and their allies, since they allow government to be what it is. The avoidance of critical stories applies only to the *Ledger* staff, however. If AP writes a story unfavorable to government, the *Ledger* may run it, just as it runs critical letters and resolutions. But the *Ledger* will not initiate the criticism or report it if no one else does.

The Hedermans and their allies are the Mississippi establishment. If they want change, they seek it through the application of political and economic power at the top, not through investigative reporting and newspaper editorials. The police

and highway patrol are part of that establishment. If the patrol, for instance, must be dealt with, it will be dealt with in the councils of power, not in the pages of the newspapers.

Some blacks have shown their feelings toward the Hederman papers by calling for a boycott of both the *Ledger* and the *Daily News*. They demand certain changes. Among them: fire the editor of the *Daily News* and the police reporter of the *Ledger*; resume the Jackson *Daily News* Relays, a track meet abolished after massive school integration here; hire black reporters; desegregate society pages; allow black as well as white newsboys to

win world tours sponsored by the papers; stop printing black news on a separate sheet not included in papers sold to whites; stop editorializing in news stories. But black economic power is so minuscule compared to that of the Hedermans that a boycott seems futile. The gulf between the Hederman papers and the blacks seems destined to grow wider, rather than narrower, and the Hedermans seem unconcerned.

EDWIN N. WILLIAMS

Edwin Williams is the Jackson correspondent for the *Delta Democrat-Times*, Greenville, Miss.

## Young Men Rise in Publisher Ranks

So you want to be a publisher?

If so, this Advertising Age feature (April 20) suggests, fortune is most apt to smile on you if you are the offspring of a publisher.



BILL D. MOYERS

At 36, publisher of *Newsday*, Long Island, N.Y., Mr. Moyers started his career in journalism as a reporter for the *Marshall (Tex.) News Messenger* in 1949 while a student in high school. He became assistant news editor of KTRC, the Austin radio, television owned by Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson, while a student at the University of Texas. He served in several capacities as assistant to Lyndon Johnson when Mr. Johnson was Senator, Vice-President and President. He was named President Johnson's press secretary in 1963 and resigned from this post in 1966 to become publisher of *Newsday*.



MARSHALL FIELD

At 28, publisher of the *Chicago Sun-Times* and *Daily News*, Mr. Field is the son of the late Marshall Field IV, who was publisher of the papers at the time of his death in 1965. The publisher title was not used until Mr. Field was named to the post last Oct. 1. Mr. Field worked briefly in the editorial department of the *Boston Globe* while a student at Harvard, and after graduation worked for the old *New York Herald-Tribune*. After the death of his father he began a training program with Field Enterprises Inc. and worked in each of the company's 23 divisions and subsidiaries. He was elected senior vp in 1968.



ARTHUR OCHS SULZBERGER

At 44, president and publisher of the *New York Times*, Mr. Sulzberger was named to the post in 1962 at the age of 37 by his father, Arthur Hays Sulzberger, chairman of the *Times*. Arthur (Punch) started his journalistic career as a cub reporter for the *Times* in 1932. He worked on the foreign news desk and as a foreign correspondent until he became assistant to the publisher in 1955. In 1957, he was appointed assistant treasurer, a post he held until named to the top position.



GEORGE RANDOLPH HEARST JR.

At 43, publisher of the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, Mr. Hearst is a grandson of William Randolph Hearst. He started his journalistic career in 1948 on the staff of the old *Los Angeles Examiner*. From 1954 to 1956 he served as assistant to the business manager of the *San Francisco Examiner*. He joined the old *Herald-Examiner* in 1956 as assistant business manager, and was named business manager in 1957. He succeeded his uncle, David W. Hearst, as publisher of the *Herald-Examiner* in 1960 at the age of 33, when David became vp and director of Hearst Corp.



OTIS CHANDLER

At 42, senior vp, *Times Mirror Co.*, publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*, and vice-chairman of the board, Mr. Chandler joined the *Times Mirror Co.* in 1963 and moved from department to department as an apprentice at the *Times* and *Mirror-News*. He became assistant to the president of the *Mirror-News* in 1957 and marketing manager of the *Times* in 1959. He became publisher of the *Times* in 1960, at 33, when his father, Norman, left the post to devote himself to expanding the parent organization.



THOMAS V. VAIL

At 44, editor and publisher of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Mr. Vail, son of Herman L. Vail, president of Forest City Publishing Co., joined the old *Cleveland News*, also published by Forest City, in 1949 as a reporter. He became political editor in 1953 and remained in that post until he joined the *Plain Dealer* in 1957. He became a vp in 1961. He has been on the board of directors of the Bureau of Advertising, American Newspaper Publishers Assn., and a member of Sigma Delta Chi.



PETER B. CLARK

At 42, chief executive officer of the Evening News Assn. and publisher of the *Detroit News*, Mr. Clark, a great grandson of James E. Scripps, founder of the *News*, joined the parent company in 1960, became a vp in 1961, and in 1963, at age 33, was named to his present post. Member: American Newspaper Publishers Assn., American Society of Newspaper Editors, and the Aircraft Club of Detroit.



JOHN COWLES JR.

At 41, president and chief executive officer of the Minneapolis Star & Tribune Co., a post he succeeded his father in at the age of 39, in 1960. Mr. Cowles joined the company in 1953, was named a vp in 1957, and became editor of the *Minneapolis Star and Tribune* in 1961. He is a member of the American Society of Newspaper Editors and Sigma Delta Chi.



WILLIAM F. HOBBY JR.

At 38, president of the Houston Post Co. and executive editor of the *Houston Post*, Mr. Hobby started with the paper in 1957 as assistant secretary-treasurer. He became associate editor in 1959, managing editor in 1960 and exec vp in 1963. He was elected to his present post in 1965, succeeding his mother, Oveta Culp Hobby, in the post of president at that time. He is a member of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.



## Unfinished business

### Herbert Klein's Hats

#### TO THE REVIEW:

I enjoyed Jules Witcover's excellent article ["The Two Hats of Herbert Klein," Spring]. Although he took a slap at the American University-Ruder & Finn Public Information Award at the beginning, he explained better than anyone why Klein's office got the award:

And when Klein throughout 1969 did succeed in opening more doors to newsmen and making more Cabinet-level officials available to them, the praise he received was well deserved.

Part of the praise, of course, was the Public Information Award.

Mr. Witcover is correct when he says the award winners are not selected by vote of newsmen. I would not want anyone to infer that any claim is made to the contrary. It is clearly spelled out in mailings to 500 newsmen and newswomen that they are nominating, not electing, winners. The final selection is determined by the Award Committee, which consists of representatives of the National Press Club (president), Women's Press Club (president), Department of Communication at AU (chairman and another faculty member acting as executive secretary), Ruder & Finn (Ray Nathan of the Washington office), and a government information civil servant (Bernie Posner). So long as I have been on the Award Committee, the Ruder & Finn representative has exerted no influence on the final selection.

I do not think the wisdom of the award should have to stand under the light of events or fashions of

thought which have emerged since the award was given. It is not a predictor, only recognition of performance up to the time of its presentation.

ROBERT O. BLANCHARD,  
Chairman,  
Department of Communication,  
The American University

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Mr. Witcover comments, "Mr. Blanchard's remarks suggest he is under the mistaken impression that Herb Klein's propaganda function began only after he had received the Ruder & Finn award. That definitely is not the case. The evidence of the propaganda role was there to see, if one looked, at the time of the award."*

#### TO THE REVIEW:

Mr. Witcover may be interested to learn that the funds of the Republican National Committee have enlisted the American Political Science Association in helping to undermine the White House press corps. Late in February, I received a copy of Mr. Nixon's State of the Union Message with a covering letter from Mr. Klein—the same one, I assume, that Mr. Witcover says went out to editors all over the country. The address used by Mr. Klein for me was the same incorrect one that the APSA used; so I inquired about it. Walter E. Beach, assistant director of the association, replied that on November 5, 1965, the association's Executive Committee had agreed to help the major political parties with their mailings. As you can imagine, I have been demanding either a change of the Constitution or a repudiation of the policy ever since, but to no avail.

TROWBRIDGE H. FORD  
College of the Holy Cross  
Worcester, Mass.

## Travel Writing

#### TO THE REVIEW:

Last autumn, when he was starting his so-called research, Stanford Sesser ["The Fantasy World of Travel Sections," Spring] telephoned to ask to interview me on the subject of travel writers, their integrity and lack thereof. I asked him to sketch out what he intended, and listened patiently to his preconceptions and his suggestions that the New York Times and I were honest but that others were not, and did I think this was nice, and shouldn't they be exposed. I finally halted this outline of his preplanned attack and told him substantially:

"You are about to do the same old hatchet-job story that Time did three of four years ago, that Newsweek did a year later, and that the Wall Street Journal did all over again about a year ago, and it still makes little sense. I will not speak to you for publication and what I am telling you now is not to be used in your article. . . . Every newspaper has its own way of doing business. At the Times we do things our way, and I am not setting myself up to throw rocks at others for doing things their way, nor do I intend to let you use me to throw your rocks."

I could tell from his voice and brusque farewell that he went away from the telephone mad—mad in the childish sense. It should have been obvious that in his piece he set out to take his mad out on me. There is no other reason, and certainly no foundation in fact for his insinuations about the travel section of the Times under my editorship.

I am not concerned about my reputation as an editor and reporter. I established that over many years, twenty-two of them as the travel editor of the Times, and the thousands of authors, reporters, editors, public relations people, and advertising men who locked horns with me during that tenure and millions of satisfied readers are the testimony to my integrity.

I am disturbed that the Review editors do not know the difference between what that Wall Street boy

thinks is a "puff piece" and a travel news story. For his information, the *Times* travel section under my editorship did not, and does not now, use publicity release articles or puff stories. All articles are bought and paid for, are written to *Times* specifications, and the authors are responsible to the travel editor.

Why do so many of your writers and so-called newspaper critics worry so much out loud about their professional virginity? They protest their innocence (and everyone's else lack of same) and keep looking over their typewriters for advertising managers and publicity men about to seduce them into printing things they would otherwise never, never print. Gentlemen, a reporter or an editor who is certain of his own integrity does not have to keep shouting it from his own rooftop or shouting the lack of it in others. It ill behoves the village virgin to announce regularly in the village square that she is being sorely tempted and someone else better do something about it quick.

Now, about that other silly article ["Should Newsmen Accept PR Prizes," Spring], I told the man who assembled those statistics that he should study W. C. Fields' statement of fact—"You cannot cheat an honest man." I also suggested to him in writing (an item that did not show up in his statistics) that in all my years I had never once come across a newspaperman who went out on an assignment to write a story because it might possibly win him a prize a year later. . . .

I do suggest that the *Review* editors and the Columbia School of Journalism stop worry [sic] so much about all those ogres about to rape honest, fearless, if sometimes inept journalists, and concentrate just a little on bolstering the ethics and integrity of journalists.

PAUL J. C. FRIEDLANDER  
New York Times

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Sesser comments, "Mr. Friedlander, just to get the facts straight, told me he wouldn't talk to me—period—on or off the record. Most of my information on the travel writer story came from not-for-attribution inter-

views, and I would hardly have been inclined to turn one down with the travel editor of the New York *Times*." But this is basically irrelevant. Instead of an attack on my age (I am twenty-seven and offer no apologies) I would have preferred to see a response to my criticisms—such as the point that Mr. Friedlander ran a puff piece on Florida each week next to the Florida travel ads. Maybe he would prefer to call them articles that accentuate the positive, but nevertheless there they were."

#### TO THE REVIEW:

Since that travel editor "of one Philadelphia paper" who is described as "also in charge of comics, maps, puzzles, stamps, gardens, schools, and the bridge column" works either for the Knights or the McLeans, I wonder, in the interest of good reporting which the *Review* epitomizes, if readers might not be entitled to know which of the two it is?

B. DALE DAVIS  
Assistant Managing Editor  
Philadelphia Bulletin

EDITOR'S NOTE: It was, at the time of writing, the *Annenbergs*; it is now the *Knights*.

### White House 'Ratings'

#### TO THE REVIEW:

You noted [PASSING COMMENT, Spring] that the Columbus, O., *Dispatch* had broken a story on White House ratings of the TV networks' news credibility, and you printed the essential information that the *Dispatch* reported. In the March 18, 1970, edition of *Variety*, a story I wrote dealt with the same facts, giving full credit to the newspaper. I went far beyond the *Dispatch* story, however, in an effort—ultimately futile—to get White House confirmation of the network ratings. In the process I noted

that White House aide Patrick Buchanan had earlier told interviewers for WTOP-TV in Washington that "three of us monitor each of the evening network news shows." . . .

I am bothered by your story because although *CJR* consistently advocates that reporters tie events together and give perspective to the news, you failed to give *Variety* credit for doing so.

LAURENCE MICHIE  
Washington Bureau  
*Variety*

EDITOR'S NOTE: We are happy to credit "*Variety*" and Mr. Michie for their enterprise.

### Myths and Violence

#### TO THE REVIEW:

Terry Ann Knopf, in "Media Myths on Violence" [Spring], refers to an Associated Press report out of Dallas on May 2, 1969, concerning a takeover of the Southern Methodist University president's office by black students, and she notes that the report wasn't true.

I would like to get AP off the hook. Its report was obtained from the *Times Herald*, so the primary fault lies in our office rather than in AP's. The Dallas AP bureau is housed adjacent to our newsroom, and it naturally has access to carbons of our copy. I would also like to point out that the report was found to be erroneous within some thirty minutes and was, of course, immediately corrected.

It might be of interest to review how the erroneous report got out. There had been minor controversy on the SMU campus for some time between black students and the administration. It was finally agreed that the university president would meet with a group of black students to hear their grievances. The students were to meet with President Tate at mid-morning in his office.

The building was to be sealed off to all students and to all newsmen and photographers.

At 7:30 on the morning of the meeting, the information director and the vice president for administration of SMU visited my office to brief me on how they planned to handle the affair. They presented me with the president's already written reply to the students' demands. They also informed me that only the president would meet with the students, that he would not "capitulate" to demands, and that if the meeting became acrimonious or appeared headed for a deadlock, the president would simply leave.

After several hours, one black student came to the door of the building and announced to the students and newsmen gathered outside that "we are staging a sit-in. We have taken over." When this was called in to the rewrite desk, we sought verification. The university's director of information confirmed that the president had left his office and that the students had remained. He did not say (and he was asked) whether anyone else remained to talk further with the students (which, as it turned out, was the case). Contact with law enforcement officials revealed they also had reports of a takeover and were moving their forces to a closer perimeter around the campus.

Given the information in the early-morning briefing and these circumstances, we went to press with a report of a takeover of the president's office by the students, and AP went with our report. Given the same circumstances, I would probably do the same thing again. I would point out that the president dodged reporters after leaving his office and later refused to accept calls or queries.

Within an hour, the university's director of information did find out and relay to newsmen that other university officials had remained to continue the discussions with the students—a fact which completely negated the concept of a takeover. With that, AP corrected its report and the *Times Herald*, of course, replated to correct ours. If we had been in the position of the morning *Star-Telegram*, we could have waited

and placed the entire matter in perspective, as we did the next day.

ROBERT HOLLINGSWORTH  
Managing Editor  
Dallas Times Herald

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Mr. Hollingsworth's candor is to be commended. But the point made by Miss Knopf and by the Violence Commission task force excerpt accompanying her article was: journalists who have spread erroneous reports such as this must stop thinking, "Given the same circumstances, I would probably do the same thing again." If we are to be responsible and credible we must change our thinking to: "Given the same circumstances and what I now know, I would report only what I could verify."*

## Manson and Mylai

TO THE REVIEW:

Perhaps my reaction is defensive, but I think the juxtaposition under PASSING COMMENT of "The Mylai Incident" and "The Tate Case" [Winter, 1969-70] deserves more than passing comment.

Under "The Tate Case," the *Review* correctly points out that the *Los Angeles Times* "front-paged a lengthy 'confessional' by Susan Atkins in which she—one of the accused in Los Angeles—portrays Charles Manson as instigator of and the chief participant in the mass slayings in the home of Sharon Tate last August. No trial, of course, had yet been held." In concluding this item, the *Review* adds: "If court-imposed impingements on pretrial reporting are to be avoided, the media themselves must take steps to see that repetition of this shameful episode does not occur."

Under "The Mylai Incident," the *Review* goes on to say, "After the dimensions of the event had become apparent from the initial stories, there were regrettable excesses in pursuing possibly prejudicial supplementary material, it is true. Some editors, to their credit, already have expressed second thoughts

about this. But the media were so instrumental in bringing the case to public attention and so many protective legal devices are available to the accused—including verdict of a mistrial—that the excesses in this instance are not of overriding concern." [Emphasis added.]

Does the *Review* thus propose that the press have one rule of ethics that applies to young soldiers and another and different rule of ethics that applies to young civilians? Or that "verdicts of mistrial" are possible remedies only in the cases of young soldiers? Would the *Review* contend that a newspaper, which has dug out and printed the details of a bureaucratic scandal—details on which subsequently a grand jury indictment was returned and convictions were obtained—has not published possibly prejudicial material? Surely the *Review* can tick off any number of Pulitzer Prizes awarded for such published material, including a 1969 award to the *Los Angeles Times* for Meritorious Public Service.

I respectfully submit that careful reading of the Susan Atkins "confessional" might well define and possibly help to excise a sociological evil of greater national proportions than either that at Mylai or those at City Hall. For the Susan Atkins "confessional" documented in terrible and almost unbearable detail what may happen to immature minds when exposed to the drug and sex cults of our permissive society.

More important perhaps than all of this, insofar as the press is concerned, it seems to me that those who practice journalism, and those who teach it, must come more closely to grips with the question of what the press has a First Amendment obligation to pursue—whether to print the news as it finds it, or to shrink further from conflict with those who would circumscribe the freedom of the press.

NICK B. WILLIAMS  
Executive Vice President  
and Editor  
*Los Angeles Times*

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Mylai story, like the exposé of governmental*

laxity and corruption for which the "Times" won a 1969 Pulitzer Prize, involved an attempted official cover-up—in this case, one with international implications. Only publicity could end the cover-up. In the Tate case investigation was well along, suspects had been arrested, and a trial was planned. Therefore, as we stated, "no public interest" was served by publication of a sensational, titillating confessional purchased from one of the suspects. Possibly this is why the Mylai exposé has won so many major prizes while the Susan Atkins memoirs have merely sold newspapers and been turned into a paperback book.

## Teacher Transfers

### TO THE REVIEW:

In the Spring issue, Arnold Forster, general counsel of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, says in a letter that the "involuntary 'transfer' of teachers out of a school district . . . had no precedent in established New York City practice and no sanction [in] law."

Such involuntary transfers as occurred in Ocean Hill-Brownsville during the spring of 1968 occur all the time. They occurred before the teachers' strike and they have occurred since. The only event that was without precedent was the United Federation of Teachers' reaction. Normally, it reacts to such

transfers at supervisory hearings. Such hearings do not provide much due process, and before Ocean Hill-Brownsville, the UFT never saw fit to do very much about it. Since the strike, the union has resumed its attitude of indifference.

The New York City Board of Education by-laws specifically authorize such transfers and do not provide any rights of due process, as are provided for teachers facing dismissal from the entire system. Neither does the UFT contract say anything about involuntary transfers. The NYCLU has fought for such rights publicly; UFT has not.

Fred Nauman, one of the teachers subsequently transferred out of JHS 271 in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, went to court because he believed as Mr. Forster does that such transfers without due process were illegal. State Supreme Court Justice Beckinella dismissed the suit and ruled on March 20, 1969, that teachers could be transferred under state law without due process.

IRA GLASSER  
Associate Director  
New York Civil Liberties  
Union  
New York City

## Ventura Blackout

### TO THE REVIEW:

Your usually fine magazine was flawed in the Winter issue ["Multiplying Media Voices"] by a mis-

statement of facts concerning KKOG-TV, Ventura, Calif. While it did turn aside the usual reruns, KKOG-TV was never "boosted by local advertisers" and the only "black" it "went into" was the black on its channel as it left the air.

MARVIN SOSNA  
Editor  
News Chronicle  
Thousand Oaks, Calif.

## A Story's Death

### TO THE REVIEW:

Your "Death of a Story" item [PASSING COMMENT, Spring] deserves to be enshrined by the Columbia School of Journalism as a classic example of vicious innuendo, incomprehensible logic, and, above all, shoddy reporting.

The article raised the question of why a story dealing with the plight of underpaid hospital workers and the efforts of Local 1199 Hospital and Nursing Employees (AFL-CIO) to bargain for them had been killed after appearing in one edition of the Perspective section of the Sunday Sun. If you had bothered to exercise the most basic journalistic tenet of checking both sides, I would have been glad to give the background and facts.

The background: Several weeks before the article appeared, the Johns Hopkins Hospital had acceded to all the union's basic economic demands. The big obstacle to a settlement at the time of the article and the week before was the issue of union security. The union had scheduled a strike vote for the following week in an effort to gain a union shop. The whole controversy was clouded with racial overtones and city officials feared that a strike might precipitate another outbreak of citywide violence. At the Perspective news conference early in the week the hospital piece was billed as an analysis of the growing influence of Negroes in Baltimore's labor movement.

The facts:

1) The article was killed on my express orders because it was a bad

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piece and for no other reason. It was emotionally one-sided and, instead of dealing with the broader aspects of Negro unionism, it focused on the historic low salaries of hospital workers which long since had ceased to be an issue in the threatened strike.

2) The article was read only by the editor of Perspective before it went to the composing room. When a proof of it became available to the managing editor's desk Saturday afternoon, my assistant was bothered by the tone of the article and telephoned me to ask if I had cleared it. After he read it to me, I ordered the story killed. This was before the first edition but too late to substitute another article.

3) The sinister implications of

the Sun's ownership structure would have been dissipated by a modicum of journalistic enterprise which would have resulted in both a more accurate presentation of the facts and the revelation that William F. Schmick, Jr., president of the A. S. Abell Company, is also a director of the Hopkins Hospital.

4) This fact, however, had nothing to do with the decision to kill a bad story. One of the great strengths of the Sun is that its news columns are under no pressure whatsoever from the publisher or the directors. Mr. Schmick would have it no other way. And I would have it no other way.

PAUL A. BANKER  
Managing Editor  
Baltimore Sun

EDITOR'S NOTE: We welcome Mr. Banker's comments but we stand by our original item. Despite the delicacy of many of labor reporter McClintock's subjects, staff members inform us he never before had had a story killed. Nor were he or Perspective's editor allowed to salvage the piece. Nor was a revised version of the story ever allowed to be run.

We clearly indicated that self-censorship—concern that the story "might displease the owners"—could have been the cause. Such is a hazard of interlocking directorates. "Either way," as we wrote, the result is the same—a story killed.

For our readers' information, an excerpt from the "bad" story, as originally published, is reproduced below.

## For Sam Smith, hospital orderly: a battle whose time has come

By JOHN M. MCCLINTOCK

WE were making 40 cents an hour, working 12 hours at a stretch. And, man, I couldn't cut it. I couldn't make it with four kids."

The frail 58-year-old Negro was talking the other day about his job in a Baltimore nursing home in 1962. The workers had organized a strike, only to return to their jobs a few days later. Nobody had enough money to stay out.

"We had nothing. We got nothing. We was nothing," he said.

The worker's comment is typical of the plight of the nation's 2.5 million hospital and nursing home employees. And it partially explains the civil rights fervor that has characterized the recent union organizing drives at hospitals in the city. The workers are the dishwashers, nurses' aides, cooks, attendants and so-called "mentals" whom one sees but never really recognizes.

The television soap operas do not thrill us with the exploits of Sam Smith, hospital orderly. The romance and fire is reserved for doctors and nurses.

### Everyone knows

The orderlies and dishwashers are essential only to the unromantic, unmentionable processes of health care: the dirty linen, the bed pans, the scraping of plates, the pushing of wheelchairs. These are the lowest jobs, jobs that attract workers from the lowest rung of the socio-economic ladder—the Negroes, the Puerto Ricans, the Mexican-Americans.

When the Johns Hopkins Hospital talks about its workers as "employees whom we will continue to treat with dignity and respect," everyone knows they are talking about Negroes. And when New York-based Local 1199E of the Hospital and Nursing Home Employees Union (AFL-

Mr. McClintock is a labor reporter for The Sun.

CIO) began its Baltimore drive last April, everyone knew that its appeal was to Negroes.

The union was then in one of the greatest battles of the American labor movement. It had confronted two public hospitals in Charleston, S.C., with a strike by Negro women hospital workers. The strike, which lasted 113 days, involved the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and for months television screens in the nation were filled with pictures of Mrs. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Rev. Ralph David Abernathy marching in support of the workers.

It was not a labor battle in the traditional sense. The union was challenging

**A victory for Local 1199E at Johns Hopkins . . . will represent another important breakthrough in the fight against poverty.**

—Mrs. Coretta Scott King August 26 at the Johns Hopkins Hospital.

racism in the home state of Strom Thurmond and Mendel Rivers.

If the union could win there, it could win anywhere. The same conditions—perhaps to a lesser degree—prevailed in nearly every metropolitan hospital in the country. At stake were the allegiances of the nation's health-care workers who, for the most part, had never been unionized. These 2.5 million workers are greater in number than the workers in the country's basic steel industry.

The union victory in Charleston inextricably identified it with the civil rights movement of Martin Luther King, Jr. The union had won a series of tough strikes before in New York city, but this strike—with its curfews and National Guard troops—had the flavor of Selma,

Ala., of the white establishment beating down on an oppressed minority.

The effect on the organizing drive in Baltimore has been spectacular. In the past eight months, the union has achieved recognition at 5 major hospitals, including the Hopkins, and 14 nursing homes. With 6,000 members, it already has become one of the largest in the state; there are about 11,000 hospital workers in the Baltimore area. The union membership figure also includes nursing home employees whose total number is not known. The four other hospitals that have recognized the union are Lutheran, Maryland General, Franklin Square and Sinai. An election is to be held next week at the Greater Baltimore Medical Center and at the John F. Kennedy Institute for retarded children.

The victories at the hospitals were especially impressive since such nonprofit institutions are exempted from federal collective bargaining laws and they were not required to hold representative elections.

### Flown in

But the Charleston message had been unmistakably clear. No one wanted a Charleston in Baltimore. The union was granted its elections.

And in the key election at the Hopkins—the largest, most prestigious hospital in the state—Mrs. King was flown to Baltimore to rally support. The workers subsequently voted overwhelmingly for the union. The handwriting of Martin Luther King, Jr., was on the wall. In only one case, that of tiny North Charles General Hospital, was the union defeated in an election here.

Charleston had been the kickoff to a national organizing campaign that went successively to Baltimore, Durham, N.C., Pittsburgh, Philadelphia-Harrisburg and Dayton, Ohio. Only in Baltimore, how-

(Continued)

## REPORT ON REPORTS

Summaries and reviews  
of current literature in journalism

"Cable Television and Media Concentration, Part I: Control of Cable Systems by Local Broadcasters," by Stephen R. Barnett, *Stanford Law Review*, January, 1970; "The Wired Nation," by Ralph Lee Smith, *The Nation*, May 18, 1970.

Law professor Barnett, a former consultant to the President's Task Force on Communications Policy, offers a detailed critique of FCC media diversification policy and concludes that cross-ownership of broadcast and cable systems serving the same locality should be prohibited; Smith, in a special issue of *Nation*, provides a lively and informative "basic primer on cable TV."

"The Most Unforgettable Place I Ever Worked," by Kenneth Gross, *Weekend with Newsday*, February 28, 1970.

A young liberal hired by the *Digest* as part of its drive to broaden readership provides a fascinating account of three months' duty in Chappaqua.

"The Phony Issue of News Management," by Bernard Roshco, *Interplay*, April, 1970.

A former Washington newsman, now a doctoral candidate in sociology, questions the validity of the Nixon Administration's broadsides against the press on the grounds that "almost all political news is managed news" and politicians reflexively try to use the press.

"How to Handle the New Breed of Activist Reporters," by Norman A. Cherniss, *Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors*, May 1970; "The 'Cabal' at the New York Times: Which Way to the Revolution?" by Edwin Diamond, *New York*, May 18, 1970.

The associate editor of the *Riverside, Calif., Press-Enterprise*, in a free-flowing essay on reporter activism, urges that editors consider its causes as well as how to handle it; Diamond chronicles unconventional staff activities on Forty-Third Street.

"The Stories the Newspapers Do Cover," by John Tebbel, *Saturday Review*, April 11, 1970.

A veteran journalism historian, reporting on a week's sampling of ten non-New York and non-Washington newspapers, asserts that "critics of the press are usually just as wrong in their complaints about what papers do print as they are about what they feel ought to be offered."

"The Hot Magazines Aim at Special Targets," *Business Week*, May 2, 1970.

A lively and thorough—if predictable—analysis of the "heady boom in special audience magazines."

"Chronicle's Woes," by William McAllister, *Wall Street Journal*, April 2, 1970.

A staff reporter perceptively reviews the situation of Charles Thieriot, publisher of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, whose critics apparently stand some chance of success in legal actions which allege that "Mr. Thieriot's company wrongfully controls the . . . media in the San Francisco area. . . ."

"A Bibliography of Articles on Broadcasting in Law Periodicals 1920-1968," *Journal of Broadcasting*, Winter 1969-70, Part II, published in association with *Federal Communications Bar Journal*, No. 3 (Part II), 1969.

This extremely useful compilation, prepared by graduate students in Communications, is divided into three sections—two of which appeared in the 1957 and 1958 summer issues of the *Journal of Broadcasting* and cover articles on regulations and rights published from 1920 through 1955.

"The Armed Forces Broadcast News System: Vietnam Version," by Randall J. Moody, *Journalism Quarterly*, Spring, 1970.

A former Army captain and onetime news director of the American Forces Vietnam Network recounts how the U.S. military command in South Vietnam violates Department of Defense regulations against censorship and shields American servicemen there from all the "legitimate news" about the war on the assumption that "the G.I. should be 'protected' from bad news about his organization."

"Dean Burch Watches Television," by Elizabeth B. Drew, *Washington Monthly*, May, 1970.

An incisive analysis of the FCC and its chairman by an *Atlantic* contributing editor, who finds that "the strongest vibrations from the Burch appointment . . . have come less from any specific move by the FCC than from a number of actions on the part of the Nixon Administration which placed him in such a sensitive job."

"There is a network news bias," by Edith Efron, "In defense of TV news: an interview with Eric Sevareid," *TV Guide*, February 28 and March 14, 1970.

Broadcast newsmen Howard K. Smith and Eric Sevareid comment from opposite points of view about the objectivity of news coverage.

DANIEL J. LEAB

the lower case

## Women's Liberation really is broad-based

—Chicago Sun-Times, May 21.

## Army Tries a New Idea

—Washington Post, June 7.

## Mayor Assails 'Criminals' Who Disrupt Pubic Affairs

—Banner headline, Baltimore News-American, May 14.

## Mrs. Howard Hughes Gets Around, But Manages To Remain Invisible

—Sacramento Bee, December 12, 1969.

## Press Is Banned From UCD Dead-Horse Probe

DAVIS — An inquiry into the mysterious deaths of 11 horses was closed to the press and public here because the information involved "doctor-patient" relationships.

More than 20 persons attended the 3½-hour session yesterday at the University of California campus here, seeking to find out what killed horses pastured next to a Humble Oil Co. refinery near Benicia, Solano County.

A university administration spokesman said the press was excluded because discussions covered "privileged material" and "doctor-patient" relationships.

Here in Rochester, the National Petition Committee is a conspicuous example of the right way to protest. In a half-page advertisement in this newspaper yesterday, local people and organizations who support the committee — as noted

### Doctor-what?

—Sacramento Bee, February 12, 1970.

### Establishment view

—Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, May 18.



HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

## Argentina's Junta Picks Obscure Army Man As President

BUENOS AIRES — Brig. Gen. Roberto Marcelo Levingston, a relatively obscure Army careerist, was named by the military junta last night as the new president of Argentina.

Levingston, 58, replaced Lt. Gen. Juan Carlos Onganía, who was overthrown Monday

Earlier in the week, the junta announced it was drawing up a new charter that would make the president and the armed forces chiefs "co-legislators."

The junta is made up of Lt. Gen. Alejandro Lanusse, commander of the army; Adm. Pedro Gavi, head of

### Juxtaposition triumphant

(Above) Peoria Journal Star, June 14.

(Below) New York Post, April 17.

## The Addicts: Which Way Out?

Series by Jay Levin • Today: Methodism • Page 41

### WEATHER

Today's Forecast

Partly cloudy

High 65, Low 45

Wind: Light

Humidity: 60%

Visibility: 10 miles

## New York Post



## THE WAY IS DOWN

### Good fortune department

—London Express dispatch, New York Post, March 31.

Twenty-eight-year-old tailor Yuksel Conker pointed to a row of collapsed homes. He explained his wife and father were still buried there.

Conker was more fortunate than many. Before it was over, his entire family had been wiped out.

### Brooks Hays in Racing Post

RALEIGH, N. C., Jan. 16 (UPI) — Brooks Hays, the Arkansas Representative who was defeated for re-election in 1956 during the Little Rock school integration crisis, was named today to head North Carolina's race relations agency. Mr. Hays will be chairman of the North Carolina Good Neighbor Council. The chairman of the

### Racing-ism at work

—New York Times, January 17.

## Second reading

# A reporter is ...

■ A growing number of people, on the Right and on the Left, believe that journalism should be an extension of politics by other means. The New Left thinks we are tools of the Establishment; the New Right (in Washington) thinks we are a liberal conspiracy. Both sides want us to sign up and get on the team — get with it. But the people who say this don't understand the nature of the business.

Reporters, I confess, think somewhat alike. Men who work for the *New York Daily News* and the *New York Times* tend to come to similar judgments on men and events. This is because reporters share a communality of experience which is unique; reporters, by the nature of their work, spend time with the poor, with the hungry, with the wounded and dispossessed of our society. Young men who begin as police reporters see a sort of Dickensian underside of American life. When they begin covering politics, they see the differences between rhetoric and reality; this produces an important kind of skepticism. Some of these men and women in journalism are given the task of writing down and remembering the promises of politicians; this can produce a kind of cynicism not unknown in the craft.

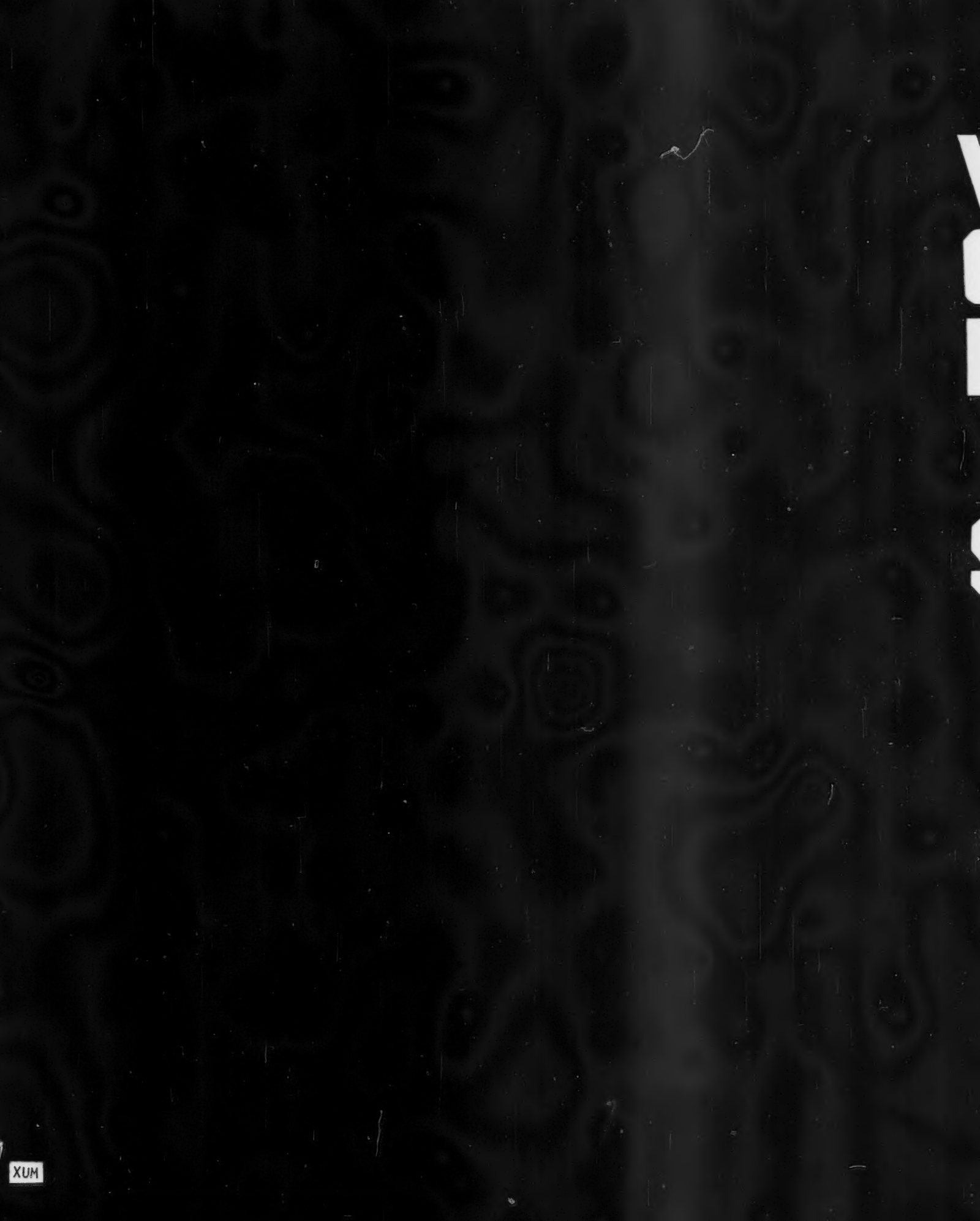
But any group of people professionally involved with the problems of poverty and hunger and crime and housing and race and war and domestic violence and politics — any group exposed to these things is likely to develop an attitude toward life. A bias. Reporters, I think, probably have a bias toward rational solutions to known problems; a bias toward social action; a bias toward people who are really trying to help, a bias toward pragmatism and common sense. Reporters are people — and they tend to appreciate other people who are not pompous and self-serving; they tend to appreciate competent and honest men; they tend to be hard on scoundrels and buffoons.

They learn — first-hand — that things must be done (in effort and money) to solve problems, and that gets them in trouble with the conservatives. They learn — first-hand, in the wars and the riots — that violence and radicalism seldom solve anything, and that gets them in trouble with the New Left.

Most reporters are members of the extreme center — I am — and it's a difficult place to be these days.

—John Chancellor,  
Remarks to the American Civil  
Liberties Union,  
New York City, May 11, 1970.





Y  
P  
K